

THE BRIDGE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY
"THE CHURCH AT THE SINGING BRIDGE"

APRIL 2021



HE IS RISEN!
HE IS RISEN
INDEED!

RENOVATIONS BEGIN

On Wednesday, February 23, the church voted to begin a remodeling project on the first floor of the Moffatt building. Existing men's and women's restrooms will be removed, and new restrooms that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act will be installed. Other renovation upgrades include a small gathering area in the front hall in addition to new lighting and paint in the main entrance and hallway.

Gary Scott, Properties Committee Chairperson, anticipates the project to cost \$120,000. The Finance Team proposed funds be drawn from four existing line items in the budget. If the cost of the project is less than \$120,000, remaining funds will go to the general fund.

As of Monday, March 22, building permits had been obtained, the dumpster had arrived, and demolition had begun.



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THE FRANKFORT FLOOD OF 2021

First Baptist Church recognized rich blessings during the flood of March 2021. While so many towns, businesses, and individuals across Kentucky battled record setting waters of the Kentucky River, FBC was able to escape with minimal damage.

Waters enter the church when flood stages reach 39.9'. This year's crest was 40.16'.

As usual, the first area affected was through the drain in Building Superintendent Tony Hager's office. Other areas to take in water included the kitchen and pantry, elevator shaft, bathrooms, Fellowship Hall, and the Nexus room. The lowest part of Fellowship Hall took on a 3" depth of water.

With the assistance of staff, 11 volunteers, and hired movers, all items from the Fellowship Hall level, including carpet in the Nexus room, were able to be moved to upper floors and kept dry.

To date, \$1,527.81 has been expended due to the flood including payment for movers of industrial grade kitchen items, rental of wet-vacs, and purchase of sand bags.

For the minimal damage,
For the volunteers,
For the prayers,
For the thoughts and inquiries,
For the blessings,
We give great thanks.



The Kentucky River, behind FBC, crested at 40.16' on March 5, 2021.



3" of water entered Fellowship Hall, but time had allowed for the room to be cleared.



In preparing for potential flood waters to enter the building, carpet was pulled from all Nexus room.

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*Blessed be the
God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ! By his
great mercy he has given us a
new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead.*

1 Peter 1:3

FBC STREAMING TO YOUTUBE, JOINS INSTAGRAM

Communications at FBC continue to grow and expand as we strive to connect with those who need help and those who can be helpers. In addition to sharing the morning worship service live on Facebook, Adam and David Columbia have worked to simultaneously stream to our YouTube channel, "First Baptist Church at the Singing

Bridge." The FBC YouTube channel allows viewers to enjoy the live service and access prior services and children's sermons.

FBC has also joined the social media outlet, Instagram. You can follow "firstbaptistfrankfort" and see photos and stay up to date on what's happening in the life of our church.



SAFELY MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

BY DR. KEITH FELTON, SENIOR PASTOR

*"The yard signs are working! Sharon and I met a couple on a walk in our new neighborhood. They said they saw our sign and looked up the website! I invited them to check out our services."
~Keith*

Thank you for participating in our survey concerning in-person church activities. I was so pleased at how many of you took the time to complete the survey along with providing additional comments about this important transition back into our facilities. The survey revealed varied results about your comfort levels in returning to in-person activities. As a staff, we will be planning with our number one priority being safety. When we come back, how we come back and what it will all look and feel like according to CDC guidelines will ultimately be our best efforts. By mid-April, our staff will have had our 2nd dose of the vaccine and be two weeks out, hopefully fully immunized. The consensus of the reports I am reading say that every adult that desires to get vaccinated will have the opportunity by the end of May. I read an article stating the USA could reach herd immunity by mid-summer. This good news leads me to believe we will be back in-person relatively soon.

our rear-view mirror someday, we may learn that some decisions were the wrong ones. I hope not, but often when individuals, groups, or organizations face unparalleled events, it is challenging to do everything exactly right. Whatever we learn in the future, one thing will be true and that is we made what we thought was the safest decision with the information we had at that time.

The good news is there is light at the end of the tunnel. The bad news is we are not there yet. AND when we are able to get back in-person, initially, it will not be like before...at least that is what we think right now. Presently, the science is not confirmed or updated about things like forced breath (large group singing), how to assimilate unvaccinated children and youth, incoming variants of the virus, when herd immunity is reached and what that will mean exactly. We will work through all of this in the safest way possible with the most current data available.

You all have been incredibly patient and supportive. While we are not in the end-zone yet, I know we can endure and be stronger because of the struggle. We haven't been around for over 200 years to allow this to break us. I believe in you. I love and miss you. Thank you for continuing to engage in our online services. We will get through this...together as a beloved community of Christ.

It is imperative we return as safely as we can. We have ALL been learning as we go, and it has been difficult knowing exactly how to navigate an unprecedented situation. The FBC staff have been earnestly seeking direction from God, experts, and our congregation. When in doubt, we have chosen to err on the side of caution. When all of this is hopefully in



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201 ST. CLAIR STREET | FRANKFORT, KY

Beloved
COMMUNITY
FBC 2021 | JOHN 13:1-17

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THE RETURN FROM EXILE

BY REV. AMANDA STANDIFORD, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF CHILDREN AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

I have struggled with putting words around both the joy and the anxiety that well up in me when I start to think about returning to gathering together at FBC. But as usual, Godly Play helps.

When we tell the story of the Babylonian exile in Godly Play, we talk about how the people of God were marched away from the Promised Land. They had no choice. It happened quickly and without much warning. In the story, once the wooden people have made their way from Jerusalem to Babylon, we drop a heavy chain across the sand in the desert box, blocking the path of return. We say firmly, "And they could not go home."

And so it has been for us. COVID-19 has driven us from our routines and our comfort zones. While it has kept us, quite literally, in our houses, it has also kept us from a lot of the things that feel like home. It has been a chain across the desert.

In the story, time passes. The people of God mourn. They hang their harps on the weeping willows. We have done this. And then they figure out how to be okay in this new place. They find ways to gather. They build their lives in this new normal. They continue to turn toward Jerusalem when they pray. That doesn't sound too unlike tuning into worship on Facebook Live or showing up for Bible study on Zoom.

*[COVID-19] HAS BEEN A
CHAIN ACROSS THE
DESERT.*



When the people of God are finally allowed to go home, it happens in waves, which also rings familiar. The heavy chain is lifted but the people struggle a bit making their way over the deep marks it has left

in the sand. I think this is where we are in the story right now. We can see the Promised Land again. We know we'll be home soon. But there's a desert to cross between here and there, and this time, there are no Babylonian soldiers showing us the way – we're navigating with less guidance. And it's a slow migration. We're not all marching back in a big group like we did when we left.

When we do finally return, things will be different. Everything won't be just the way we left it or just the way we remember it. There is still rebuilding to do. It's going to be a while before we can take off our masks, sing out loud, and embrace one another. We are going to have to be gentle with each other, knowing that the exile has shifted something inside all of us, and recognizing that it has probably affected us all differently.

I WONDER...

I wonder what we need to do as we re-gather, knowing that not everyone has arrived here yet? I wonder how we hold space for those who are still away? I'm thinking especially of our kids, youth, and other vulnerable folks who are still a ways from being vaccinated. We don't know exactly when this exile will fully end. I wonder how we can remember that they are still a part of us, and how we can continue to show our love and support for them? I wonder how we can hold space for those who have joined with us for the first time while we were in exile?

I wonder how we can rebuild what's been lost in healthy ways? I wonder how we'll decide what from before must be rebuilt, and what from before needs to be reshaped or re-purposed into something new. I wonder how we can share in the work of rebuilding together?

As the world slowly creeps back toward feeling more normal, I look forward to wondering alongside all of you.

RETURNING MEANS BOTH JOY AND DEVASTATION

BY REV. RICHARD SUMMERS, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MUSIC AND ADMINISTRATION

Soon vaccines will be available to all those who want them. With that comes the possibility of returning to in-person worship. Unfortunately, that does not mean returning right away to the way we are accustomed to worshipping. Experts say that singing aerosols the virus and can spread it to great lengths. Additionally, since it lingers much longer in aerosol form, it can spread for some time after the singing stops. Wearing a mask while singing reduces greatly the length of spread but does not completely contain it. Therefore, until data is available showing that even vaccinated persons cannot spread the virus, singing remains dangerous. Our singing together will be among the very last things we will be able to do in our return. I confess to you that I am devastated by that fact. Our worship is enriched so much by our congregational singing and that of our amazing choir. It is hard for me to even imagine gathering and not being able to sing together.

On the positive side, we will be able to resume ringing bells. Soon after, at least hopefully, the Instrumental

Ensemble will be able to return, though the jury is still out on how far the wind and brass instruments spread the virus. I have read far more than I want about all of this and the fact is there are no definitive answers available at this time. The Music Ministry will do whatever is necessary to continue to keep our congregation safe. My heart breaks with every Sunday we are not singing together, but I believe we must continue to protect one another, even if it takes far longer than we desire. I honestly don't know how I will emotionally hold it together once we are back together. I have envisioned it in my mind so many times. To stand before the congregation again to lead a hymn, to stand before the choir again to lead an anthem, to stand before the Instrumental Ensemble and wave the baton, to stand before the Handbell Ringers and hear them ring will certainly be a foretaste of heaven itself. Never again will I take for granted a single rehearsal or worship service. May, by the grace of God, we be able to sing and play again soon.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

BY REV. MARCUS PERNELL, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF STUDENTS

As our conversations about re-opening continue, I can't help but wonder where you are, personally, as far as this goes. More specifically, I wonder how our youth feel about re-opening. I don't want to make assumptions because a number of them have resumed in-person schooling and extracurricular activities. I just wonder is all.

While I am mindful to how others might feel, I'm personally excited at this oncoming reality because I have deeply missed seeing our youth. I can't even begin to put into words how emotional I've gotten for the past year walking into the youth area every Sunday morning and no one's there. As I'm thinking about it now, it's incredibly sobering at the reality that it's been over a year since we've seen each other in-person. Goodness gracious. Nonetheless, when the day finally comes, I've already determined that I'm going to be an emotionally hot mess of joy and excitement (I know, it's a lovely image to picture with yours truly). I'll be sure to keep tissues handy.

Even in the midst of my excitement I find myself asking multiple questions. Where do we even begin? What do we even talk about? It's been over a year since we've seen each other. What is this sort-of "homecoming" going to look like? For instance, it'll be the first time where our graduating seniors won't be with us and our incoming (they're already here, what am I saying?) middle-schoolers will be joining. It'll be the first time we've been together in over a year.

The thing is, I don't have answers to these questions. And that's okay. If anything, I'd rather focus on the fact that we're together again and just go from there. What about you, though? Where are your thoughts and emotions during this process?

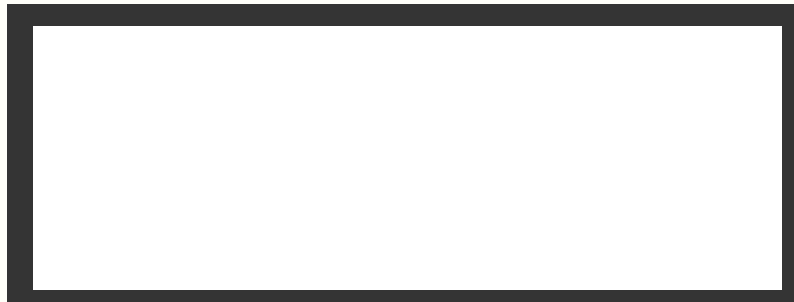


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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



CONTINUING THE WORK OF MISSIONS

BY MICHELLE CARROLL, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MISSIONS

Thinking about the unknowns of the world as we begin to ease restrictions from COVID-19 leads me to think about all the ways that missions are always unknown.

Anyone who has worked in communities, with people, especially people on the margins, for any length of time can tell you it is never the same. There's always something that surprises you—whether you just got to the neighborhood or you've been living and working there for 20 years. Flexible, available, and teachable—that's what one of my early mentors in ministry called it. That undefinable thing you need to have if you're going to dig into the world of missions ministry.

I don't know when we'll stop temperature checks at the door for Mission Frankfort Clinic or when we can re-open the Clothes Closet. I don't know what this summer looks like at Emma Quire Mission Center for visiting teams. I haven't even started thinking about us or our friends in Morocco travelling to visit one another again. I do know that through this pandemic our eyes have blown wide open to the disparity that still exists right here in America. I know that if people who were already committed to the work of caring for the materially poor before this eye-opening pandemic, like everyone here at FBC Frankfort, will continue to ask questions and further the work they were doing before the pandemic hit, then we can start to do more than meet an immediate need. Instead, we can go upstream and ask why someone is hungry, unclothed, uninsured, homeless, or trapped in predatory lending. We can begin the monumental tasks of creating systems of justice, stopping racism, and eradicating poverty. We can create Beloved Community in our neighborhoods, the Commonwealth, America, and around the world.

*Owsley County Flood Relief Trip with
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Ky*

April 27 - May 7

*Contact Michelle Carroll for more
information.*