

June 1, 2020

Hello Friends,

Yes, I am still alive! I have been able to speak with many of you lately, but have not sent out updates or requests in a couple of weeks. All of us have needed to be very flexible over the past 2-3 months as COVID-19 changed everything about the way we have been able to meet, serve, worship, and communicate. There have been challenges, to say the least, but there have also been great blessings. You are in our prayers (mine, Baptists on Mission, and BSCNC) daily as you lead your churches through these challenging days.

Personally, I have been serving as Interim Pastor at Red Bud Baptist Church in Castalia, NC since February. After several weeks of "normalcy" to start my time there, we have not been able to return to inside the building since March 8. Beginning March 22 we did online services and on May 10 we began holding drive-in services. The drive-in services have been a huge success, to the point that they really aren't in any real hurry to move back inside! When temperatures hit 90 degrees that will probably change! We have had some folks who did not come inside show up for drive-ins, so we are praying that they sense God's call on their lives during these unusual times.

This has most definitely not been a down time for Baptists on Mission! Thank you for your prayers and unwavering support. We are here to support you and to help you mobilize your churches to serve others. This is an unprecedented time and we are learning more every day.

Rebuild Centers have continued to operate using day-only volunteers. Dozens of homes were completed or brought close to completion so that the next few weeks will see many families return home after 21 months away! Thank you for your faithful prayers, volunteering, and support. Beginning now we are slowly increasing the number of volunteers who can stay overnight or who can work as day-only volunteers. Please encourage your churches, as they feel led, to plan to serve through one of our rebuild centers. They can register at: <https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/By-Mission-Type/Disaster-Relief/Hurricane-Florence>

Our Rebuild Center staff would love to share at your churches. They want to celebrate what God has done and share how churches can be involved in the weeks and months ahead. Soon families who were displaced will hit the two year anniversary of Hurricane Florence. All of the recent challenges have made it an even more discouraging time for Hurricane Florence survivors. If you will encourage your churches to let me know, I will schedule some of our staff or rebuild staff to encourage and celebrate what God is doing with your churches.

We have received a generous grant from **USDA - Farmers to Families Food Box Program** that allows us to purchase fresh fruit and vegetable boxes, milk, cooked meat, and cheese to be distributed across the state. The application period was brief, one week from when we found out about the opportunity, so we had to scramble to identify suppliers and plan a distribution strategy. On May 8 we learned we were awarded the grant and on May 15 we began distributing boxes. By the week of June 8 we will be fully engaged and each week will distribute 8000 fresh

fruit and vegetable boxes (15-17 pounds each), 2000 boxes of cooked meat (4 pounds each), 2000 gallons of milk, and at least 1000 boxes of cheese (2 pounds each). You may be receiving these boxes through your association, but even if you are not, please know that the relationships you have developed through the years we have answered the call during times of disaster are why we received this grant. This will continue at least through June with the possibility of it being extended 2 months at a time through the end of the year. Please pray that God allows us to continue offering this tremendous blessing through our churches and associations.

Truett Baptist Conference Center and Camp in Hayesville, NC is getting new roofs for two buildings. We began last week and made significant progress before rain forced us to stop. Next week we are planning to finish the roof on the office building and another building at the camp. You can see from the attached pictures that the roof is pretty large but is able to be navigated safely when volunteers exercise caution. Our plans, weather permitting, are to work June 8 - 12 to finish the project. Please let me or Gary Holland know if you or people you know can help. (Gary Holland 828-371-2301). We are staying at the camp and have plenty of space to maintain social distance!

In His service,

Paul Langston

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