

## You Started at a New Church During a Pandemic? Tell Us... How is it Going?



My family and I got to Cavalier, North Dakota on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The first service I preached at was June 14<sup>th</sup>. That was also the first time our church reopened its doors for corporate worship in three months. In turn, the temporary closing actually provided grace for entering a new ministry for two reasons. All of us were so thankful to be back open so we could meet together for worship. And it didn't just feel new to my family, it felt new to everyone. With that said, many church events and annual traditions have been cancelled this year, so my family and I will likely feel like newcomers all over again whenever the church is able to meet more corporately. However, we have not had to close our doors since we reopened, and we do not take that for granted.

The pandemic has also given us all a great opportunity to revisit how we do many things as a church family, which has been a good refocusing exercise for everyone. I am also very thankful for the Conservative Baptists who have helped counsel me, pray with me, meet with me personally, and have made themselves available anytime I need.

The hardest part of pandemic ministry has been visitation. We lost one member during this whole pandemic. He had already become a wonderful friend of my family. He was in the hospital for seven weeks before he passed. As his friend and pastor, it was hard not being able to visit him. As a new pastor you really don't know anyone in your congregation, therefore, you do not know who to visit, who not to visit, and in some cases you do not even know the people who expect you to visit.

Yet, I've learned that a congregation can recognize when their pastor genuinely seeks after their well-being. As a pastor during these unusual times, it's been important to be gracious with my congregation and gracious with myself, and become creative in order to build meaningful relationships.

This may be a hard time on all of our pastors in ministry, but we were called to love God's people in moments like this.

*Grace and peace,  
Pastor Timothy Sobitz  
Cavalier Baptist Church, Cavalier, ND*