

THE TIDINGS

GOD'S MISSION FOR TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS TO LOVE HIM FULLY AND FOLLOW HIM FAITHFULLY.

The Pastor's Perspective

Dr. Reggie Bridges

Coffee in hand, Leslie and I took a pleasant walk through our neighborhood this past Monday. And wow, it was such a beautiful evening! The cool, refreshing breeze enlivened me after a day of meetings and decisions. The choir of birds sang a peaceful anthem. The green leaves and azalea blooms pointed toward the birth of spring. The clear sunset reminded me the name of the Lord is to be praised (Psalm 113:3). And did I mention I got to commune with my wife as we walked together?

But as sweet as the evening was, we both knew that a dark, viral cloud hung over us and our neighbors. The continual closures and governmental recommendations had kept coming throughout the day, and the lengthy interruption of our lifestyles/schedules became apparent. It seemed surreal that our remote neighborhood which bore creation's elaborate décor would be threatened by a disease that had literally traveled across the globe. But such was reality!

My friends, it has been said that we are in an unprecedented time; and in many ways, we are. Even during wars and economic pains, churches gathered physically. Governments even encouraged such moments. Of course, events such as "ice storms" and hurricanes have prevented face-to-face meetings for a Sunday or two, but this crisis has taken a greater toll on our physical interactions. For me personally, I am pained not to be able to interact with you through physical worship gatherings. There is nothing like the people of God coming together as a people. However, at this time, we must find new ways to serve/worship together. Why? First and foremost, the leadership and I love this church and this community. No matter what our opinions, government leaders and medical experts tell us that this virus is dangerous, especially to the elderly and to those with compromised medical situations. Physical gatherings present health risks to the church and to our community . . . period! And while I personally would assume the risk for myself and for my family, I do not believe that I need to place others at risk. What kind of testimony would we have if we are part of the problem in spreading this virus to others around us? For me, not meeting physically right now actually communicates our love for our neighbor . . . our concern and compassion for those most vulnerable. Of course, I always want to honor our governmental authorities (Romans 13). Our President, our Governor, and other elected officials have asked us not to gather in significant groups for this specific timeframe. They are not forbidding us to worship nor are they trying to quell our prayers. Instead, they have even encouraged people of faith to intervene in spiritual power!

So, what can we do? We can be the church wherever we are! Remember that! **You** are the church! Check on your neighbor. Call a senior adult whom you know and offer to pick up groceries for them. See if a family with children needs help while school is out. Just love people! (By the way, if you do need something, call the Church Office or text NEEDS to 97000.) And what's more, tell others about the Hope you have within. I'm not sure if there has ever been a time within my life where people have talked more about life and even death. Remind them that Jesus has authority over life and death! Tell them He is hope!

I also want to encourage you to be about the spiritual disciplines. Utilize this extra time to worship personally; read the Scripture, meditate on His Word, pray fervently, etc. We will continue to offer online opportunities. Our live online worship gathering will be at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings until further notice. If you need some tech support, please let us know. In addition, I plan to offer some brief Wednesday night Bible studies and some words of encouragement from time to time on social media. Thanks to Bill Brown, I will present my Sunday morning sermon on the radio KRLQ 94.1 at 9:30 a.m. (also broadcast on Ruston's Suddenlink, Channel 20). Or you can always find the previous week's service on television Sunday at 9 a.m. on Channel 11 (KAQY).

While these are unprecedented times in some ways, they aren't in other ways. Living in a fallen world, believers have always faced challenges and pain. Some seventy-two years ago, C. S. Lewis underscored that reality when he was asked about the anxiety people had concerning the atomic bomb: "In one way we think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. 'How are we to live in an atomic age?' I am tempted to reply: 'Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents.'" In other words, our situation is not novel. The consequences of our collective sin are all around us every day. We simply must continue to trust in Christ as the Savior and Victor. We can and must make wise decisions, but our faith must always be grounded in Him! Never forget that! And never doubt how much I love and miss seeing you as a congregation together! But our God is good, and He will redeem these moments to transform lives! Believe it!

Education & Administration News

Jason Walsworth

The Lord is working. He always is, and He always does. God is at work even in and through these different and difficult times. Last week, I was thinking through what to say and how to encourage a group of guys I meet with on the Louisiana Tech golf team. The Lord provided just as he always does, and I was able to share something from Philippians 4 that I also needed to hear. All of us need to be reminded of these words: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me-put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

In the days ahead, I pray we will make the most of this time. I pray we will draw near to God and allow Him to draw near to us. I pray we will lean into our families, our marriages, and our children. I pray we will love our neighbors and share with our co-workers through all of this. I pray we will see where God is working and will join Him.

There are some great practical ways we can take advantage of this gift of time that has been given to us. Here are a few I want to implement in my own life.

- 1.) Continue to worship with us online together as a family on Sundays.
- 2.) Use our NT reading plan available at 2020.temple.life to read the Bible together.
- 3.) Go to *rightnow media* and pick out a Bible study on marriage or for men/women.
- 4.) Have a family worship night together on Wednesday nights. Download some Seeds Family Worship songs if they are young and let them go crazy while they sing.
- 5.) Allow your kids to watch *rightnow media* during the day instead of regular tv. There are many great shows and resources for all ages.
- 6.) Check on your neighbors, especially if they are senior adults and might need some help. Share the hope and peace you have in Christ with them.

Youth Missions Chicken Dinner Fundraiser

Postponed to a later date.

Tickets will go on sale again before the event.

This event benefits Youth Mission Trips.

Watch the Tidings for more information.

Louisiana Baptist has canceled RA Congress.



WAYS TO GIVE

IN PERSON

ONLINE

AND TEXT

CHURCH OFFICE: Mail or Dropoff

ONLINE: giving.temple.life

TEXTING: Text any amount to 84321 to give



**WinShape
Camps**

WinShape Camp for Communities

July 13-17

Completed Grades K-8

Registration Now at winshape.temple.life

Camp cost is \$219

A **\$50 non-refundable deposit** is due at the time of registration. Camp cost balance is due one month before camp begins.

A digital Bible Study Library is now available...and Gigantic!

Over 18,000 videos for kids, youth, and adults

JOIN FOR FREE!

Go to *rightnow.temple.life* to join.
Create your profile and explore away!

QUARANTINE SURVIVAL GUIDE

- Wash your hands often and for 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer and wipes
- Sanitize or deep clean your homes
- Avoid typical greetings with others
- Buy what you need and stop
- If you are not feeling well, stay home
- Check on the elderly and your neighbors
- Stay connected by checking *temple.life* and watch our Live Stream Sunday services on *live.temple.life*

A Thank you card has been received from...
Laura Guthrie, Compassion LIVE; CSE Faculty & Staff
(Located on the bulletin board in the Library window)

PRAYER CONCERNS

Pray for:

- our leaders (our President, Vice President, Federal, State, and Local leaders). There is no handbook for making the decisions they are having to make.
- our health care providers: doctors/physicians, nurses, hospital personnel, caregivers, first responders, and emergency management personnel.
- those with the virus, those most vulnerable, and those who may get the virus.
- our students and parents as they work through this time of change.
- those who are currently out of the country and trying to return home.
- businesses that will be affected by closings.

Congratulations to:

Adam and Marsha Hammons on the birth of their son,
Barlow Hancock Hammons. Proud brother is Branch.

The Journey Place Tiny Trekkers & Summit Kids Sally Hearn

We want to help you have Sunday School at home with your children! Free resources are available at LifeWay kids.

LifeWay Kids at Home includes a video session along with a downloadable activity page and conversation starters. To access LifeWay Kids at Home, follow the steps below.

Step 1: Go to *my.lifeway.com/redeem*

Step 2: Register if you are a new user or log in if you already have an account. This is completely free.

Step 3: Enter this redemption code: VZMD4SSQ38

Step 4: Click "Access" (if prompted to sign in again, sign in) and then click "My Dashboard," and go to LifeWay Kids at Home

Step 5: Look for the "Download" tab to Download your Activity Page and One Conversation Sheet to use as you watch the video session.

Step 6: At the bottom, you will see an instruction video, the lesson video, a missions video, and a Gospel presentation video. Click on each video to watch.

We will be mailing your activity page and take home page each week.

LifeWay Kids app is also available through the app store for apple and android users. This app provides games and activities that go along with each week's lessons.

Summit Kids Weekly Bible Reading Plan: You may email a picture of your completed card to us at *sally@temple.life* or *jessica@temple.life*. Prizes will still be awarded. Check your email for more details.

We have reworked how we are using *live.temple.life* website and have offered multiple stream links to be accessed on this page in hope to have things in one location.

You may also access from our *temple.life* website under resources > livestream

Deacons of the Week—March 22-28
Robert Davis & Jim Davison

THE TIDINGS (USPS #020005), Published Weekly except Christmas by:
Temple Baptist Church, Periodical Postage Paid, Ruston, LA 71270
Postmaster send address changes to:
Temple Baptist Church, 1515 South Service Road West, Ruston, LA 71270

Label here

Phone: (318) 255-3745 • Fax: (318) 255-0134
Website: temple.life

Week-at-a-Glance

Sunday, March 22

10 a.m. - Live Stream at *live.temple.life*, or on Facebook and YouTube

To stay within the guidelines given by the CDC and our government leaders, we have made the decision to suspend all on-campus church-related activities until further notice. This closure includes all Wednesday night activities, Sunday evening services, the use of *The Journey Place* playground, and the Family Life Center. At the time of this publication, the Church Office will remain open from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, but we encourage you to come to the office only if it is completely necessary.

Even though we are navigating unprecedented times and not able to gather physically, we believe our God is still in control and can use us to share the Gospel in creative and powerful ways! Church family, we LOVE you and are here to serve you!

Vision:

To become authentic, loving followers of Jesus,
who are experiencing life transformation through God's Word,
For the purpose of impacting our world.



TEMPLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

COME GATHER AROUND THE WORD

Core Values:

Authoritative Truth • Strengthening Worship
Authentic Community • Intentional Transformation
Hands-On Missions • Relational Evangelism
Compassionate Servanthood

Family Life Center Hours: Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Wednesday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday: 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
The Journey Place Playscape Hours: Monday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday: 2:30-5 p.m.; Friday: 9-11 a.m.
Media Center Hours: Sunday: 8:15-9 a.m.; 10:30-11 a.m.; Wednesday: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; 1:30-5 p.m.
Broadcast Hours: Sundays: 9 a.m. Channel 11 (KAQY)