



RIVER ROAD CHURCH  
BAPTIST

+ thoughtful faith +

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explorer  
special edition

## SHOWING UP

My favorite seminary professor once told a class of students (of whom I was one), “we can’t teach you everything in seminary that you need to know. I promise you that there will be times in your ministry where you will feel overwhelmed and underprepared, unsure if you should even show up. Show up anyway.”

The current COVID-19 coronavirus crisis has taught me the wisdom of this statement. I didn’t take a class entitled, “How to Pastor a Church During a Pandemic.” There is no manual or study guide with answer key to show us how to navigate these waters. But that’s okay. Ministry isn’t about having all the answers or knowing what to do in every situation. Ministry, I believe, is fundamentally about showing up, serving one another in the name of the One who created us, redeemed us, and sustained us.

In the last few weeks, your church staff has tried to show up for you. Despite many of us working from home, the River Road Church pastoral staff gathers (online via videoconference) several times a week to talk about you—what you may need, what anxieties and fears you have, how we might help you remain connected to our community of faith despite the distance. And it is our honor to do so—because we love you as part of our family.

And in so many ways, you have shown up for us. Our chair of missions recently delivered the food pantry the grocery items you generously gave. One of our former deacons has been delivering groceries and other essentials to church members in retirement

homes. Our Wednesday night chef has helped prepare meals for our homeless friends at Caritas. One dear member ensures that even in the midst of this crisis, the staff still have fresh flowers to brighten our offices.

You have gathered your families around your computer or tablet to watch the live online worship services we’re holding every Sunday. You have expressed love and appreciation to the church staff for these services and for our ministries of care. You have told us of how you’re checking in with one another regularly. Even though we’re not able to gather in person right now, that hasn’t stopped us from being the church for one another. Your staff is amazed and grateful for the ways you’ve shown up for us and one another during this incredibly difficult time.

In a recent sermon, I said: “taking care of one another in the midst of difficult times—that’s what we do best...and now is the time. Now is the time for us to pray for the sick, to care for each other, to check in on the lonely, to love our neighbors. And now is the time for us to trust in God.” You’ve taken these words to heart by showing up. Thank you.

Church, we will get through this, with God’s help.

I love you and I’m praying for you.

Daniel

### ***The building is closed, but we are open for ministry. #BeTheChurch***

Visit [rrcb.org/BTC](http://rrcb.org/BTC) to stay connected with your church family. This page is a hub for all things RRCB during this time. There you can find the weekly worship livestream; previous sermons and services; TFC programming, including *The Grace of Les Mis*; online giving; the church directory; and more. Stay connected, reach out to each other, and #BeTheChurch. Visit our Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (you don’t need to join to view) to see your church staff and fellow church members #BeTheChurch. *How can you #BeTheChurch?*

**MINISTER ON CALL — 804-464-7968**

If you have a pastoral need over the weekend or a holiday, please call the number above to reach a member of our ministerial staff. Please note, this is a shared number and text messages are not monitored.

# LIVESTREAMING

It's hard to believe that just two weeks ago our children were in school, barber shops were thriving, a trip to Costco for toilet paper (and browsing food samples) was simple. We were also gathering at 8000 River Road multiple times a week for music, fellowship, education, and worship. The threat of COVID-19 came at us like a tsunami, and in a matter of just a day or two you had to make radical changes in your ways of life. Likewise, we, as your church staff, had to make a radical shift in the way we do ministry among you.

As a part of the recent sound system renovation in the Sanctuary, a video recording system was installed that also had streaming capability. The Safety Committee authorized a wiring project just a few months ago so that I could connect that recorder to our local computer network and allow us to stream video of the service anywhere in the building. At the time, the goal was to make it available to folks who were not in worship because they were in service in other areas (nursery, greeting, preparing reception, etc.). We did not intend to make this publicly available outside the church. When the difficult decision was made not to hold public worship in the Sanctuary, we had just two days to figure out how to bring a worship experience online. In that critical time, we had the serendipitous fortune of excellent groundwork laid by the Safety Committee and Building and Property Council. With a little bit of configuration and a lot of experimentation we've been able to broadcast live from the Sanctuary to your phones, tablets, computers, and TVs wherever you are. The livestream remains available after the service and is posted on the church website, along with other previous services, at [rrcb.org/sermons](http://rrcb.org/sermons).



We know that there is no substitute for the experience of physical community in worship. However, in times like these, we are thankful to have the means to provide a virtual experience in worship. It's also a gift to work with colleagues who make that pivot look easy, because it's not! We enjoy contact and connection, and it's not easy, comfortable, or normal to facilitate worship in an empty Sanctuary. But there is warmth in knowing that our church family is not absent in spirit, but instead we are blanketing the city with our corporate worship. One day soon we will worship together again at River Road Church. But for now, I give thanks to God that even when we are not gathered together, we can still worship *as* River Road Church.

BY DANIEL INGRAM

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## HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Holy Week is upon us, River Road Church family. This time of year when we are especially reflective, comes for us in the midst of a season when we are already drawing back in order to social distance. It provides a ripe opportunity for us to spend time with the Lord, focus on the love of God expressed through Christ, and allow the Spirit to draw us close. Who among us doesn't need to examine ourselves and see where our fear presses in, doubts assail, and hope wanes? Who doesn't need to consider the depths of God's love and commitment to all of creation, and the close presence of the Saving One?

As we are slowing our frenetic pace, the air is shifting its temperature, the birds are singing a little louder, and trees are showing the life they have held inside.

Let's commit to leaning in to God's Word, finding some quiet each day, offering prayers on behalf of our world and one another, and considering how God might be breathing life and newness into us.

During Holy Week, our website will contain lectionary scripture readings for each day. Please visit [rrcb.org/BTC](http://rrcb.org/BTC) on a regular basis. There will be readings offered from the perspective of different persons who walked with Jesus on which you might think and reflect. There will be a little creative input that might enhance your worship as well as opportunities for you to share over the dinner table together or on your own, depending on the make-up of your home.

May you find deep comfort in the presence of Christ, discover hope through the words of your prayers and meditations on scripture, and be lifted from the despair of loneliness and darkness into God's marvelous light. Blessings on you through these days.

If you are not receiving church email communications, you can sign up at [rrcb.org/BTC](http://rrcb.org/BTC). If you do not have email/internet access please call 804-288-1131 ext 105 to leave me your name and address for mailed Holy Week materials.

BY ANNA PERRY MILLER

# YOUTH

What a whirlwind the past couple of weeks have been as we have attempted to shift all our programming online. My main focus has been to check in on the youth and give them a moment to forget the stress of everything. So I've hosted virtual lunch bunch where we all bring our lunch and just chat, middle school and high school chats, and a Sunday afternoon Devo. The youth Instagram (@RiverRoadYouth) feed is very active right now with quizzes, questions, and scavenger hunts. Youth are living with uncertainty right now that is stressful. Anxiety and tension are high as none of us know when this will all end, and what coming events will be canceled. My main hope is to give them moments where they feel connected, where they see the faces they love and know that they are loved.



BY MARNIE FISHER-INGRAM



## Meet with your Sunday school class, committee, or small group via Zoom.

The church has joined Zoom and we would like to invite you to continue to #BeTheChurch in order to connect with your Sunday school class, committee or small group. The ministerial staff, youth and children's ministries, and the Robert Smart class are already using Zoom to meet.

### How does Zoom work?

Zoom is a virtual conference call system that allows you to gather via computer, mobile app or phone call. Once your meeting is scheduled you are given a unique meeting code to be shared within your group.

**If you're interested in getting your group together via Zoom, contact your staff liason to schedule your meeting.**

# CHILDREN

What a busy few weeks! Transitioning from in person activities to virtual ones has been wild. Opportunities are created to connect through zoom meetings with a weekly Lunch with Mrs. Sandy and a story time. We are also connecting on Sundays for a bible lesson. The lessons may relate to the worship service content or may be a lesson that is more pertinent to the children. In an effort to support families check in meetings with parents are set up weekly to discuss parents' concerns and needs. It is through these virtual opportunities, I hope to remain connected with our families and their children. I want them to know that I love and care for them no matter where we are located.



BY SANDY ROONEY



# #BeTheChurch



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# PASTORAL CARE AND SELF-CARE DURING COVID

How do we care for ourselves and each other during the present crisis? How do we “be the church” now? We are a gathering folk during a time when we cannot gather. What does that look like? The following is a brief list some key practices when it comes to pastoral care and self-care.

## **Self-Care Tips:**

1. Take care of yourself physically. If you begin to become symptomatic, reach out to a physician.
2. Take care of yourself mentally and spiritually. Worry, stress, anxiety, fear, depression can run rampant at times like this. If you need help, call your physician, counselor, or pastor.
3. Self-care involves stress management/prevention. Do what works for you. Not sure where to start? I like Dan Bagby’s words of Talk It Out (community); Work It Out (exercise); Write It Out (reflection, journal); Pray it Out (Prayer, meditation, mindfulness).
4. Find ways to connect, even you introverts. Spend time with family. Connect with others on-line. Call. Write letters. Stream church services and programs. You are not alone. On the flip side, if you are overwhelmed by your own family at home, do find some space for solitude as well.
5. Routines tend to be helpful. Be flexible, however, as some alteration will be required. Alter though with intentionally and with purpose. Loss of any sense of routine can be problematic.
6. Make sure you rest/sleep. Especially important if you are still working. On the other hand, if this season is a break, do not sleep excessively. Get up. Get on with that purposeful routine.
7. In general, do your best to stay healthy. Eat well. Exercise. Do not over indulge in any habit that would keep you from being your best.
8. Stay informed and think well about this crisis, but do not be consumed by such. Take breaks. Find time for laughter, music, art, nature, play, beauty, games, joy, movies, books, etc.
9. Find ways to serve. Opportunities will be growing to be involved in our community. Stay tuned. Work on that which you can “give” later. Think not just in terms of objects; but also skills, knowledge, and expertise.
10. Be gentle with yourself. None of us has done this before. We’ll make it through this together.

## **Pastoral Care Tips:**

1. Do your best to stay well. You can’t offer care well if you are not well.
2. Self-Isolation is not just self-care, it is pastoral care, too. This is key to how we love others now. Feels weird. I know. But it’s the truth.
3. Focus on becoming better at caring for those to whom you are present—family, nurses, grocery clerks, delivery people, etc.
4. Reach out and care for others on-line or by phone. Pay special attention to those physically and mentally vulnerable, especially if they live alone.
5. As you connect, if you are able, offer to help in tangible ways—shop for groceries, pick up medicines, help with needed repairs, financial assistance, etc.
6. As you connect, listen well. Give one another permission to be at different “places.” Anxiety, boredom, fear, fatigue, worry about finances, frustration, a need for laughter, etc.—all of these and more can be where we find ourselves at any given moment.
7. Prayer. Pray for yourself, for one another, for those that are ill, for our leaders, for medical personnel, for our church, etc. Dare to pray for/with another over the phone or on-line, or write a prayer and mail it. Again, different. But different times call for different measures.
8. Be sensitive to children and youth. Listen to them. Answer their questions, knowing that “I don’t know,” is often times a very appropriate answer.
9. Work on care that can be “given” later. Crafts, sure; but also skills, expertise, etc. If for someone in particular, possibly communicate that to them now.
10. Be gentle with one another. None of us has done this before. We’ll make it through this together.

BY DAVID BRECKENRIDGE

### **Leonard Sweet’s Daily Quarantine Questions**

- (1) What am I grateful for today?
- (2) Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
- (3) What expectations of normal am I letting go of today?
- (4) How am I getting outside today?
- (5) How am I moving my body today?
- (6) What beauty am I either creating, cultivating, or inviting in today?

# Happy Birthday!

## April 2

Nancy Moses

## April 3

Grover Robinson  
Riley Savedge  
Shannon Sundberg

## April 4

Carolyn Briggs  
Allan Cruickshanks  
Katherine Hall  
Bill Pollard  
David Stevens

## April 6

David Davis  
Sarah Phillips  
Emily Whitty  
Michael Whitty

## April 7

Madeleine McAllister  
Carolyn Thomas  
Cathy Whitty

## April 8

Harry Phelps

## April 9

Tim Clingenpeel  
Peggy Fore  
Ryan Gilmore  
Rich Jante  
Logan Johnson

## April 10

John Cary  
Dick Harwood  
Abigail Leshar

## April 11

Margaret Phelps

## April 12

Betty Hall  
Page Kral

## April 13

Sandy Bowen  
Evan Coldiron  
Bonnie Livick  
Cindy Mistretta

## April 14

Pat Harwood  
Bill Rusher, Jr.

## April 15

John Sexton

## April 16

Anna Dockum  
Kathryn Norman

## April 17

Martha Caruso  
Dennis O'Neal  
Alexandra Davis  
Betsy Robinson  
Caleb Stanley  
Betty Woolcott

## April 18

Alice Oakey

## April 19

Will Thorne

## April 20

Anne Both  
Holden Seward

## April 21

Sheralyn Jackson  
Carl Sizemore

## April 22

Alice Blanton  
Rob Collier  
Katrina Leshar

## April 23

David Sims  
Bill Smith

## April 24

Abigail McAllister

## April 25

Jackson Hiser  
Mark Mathews  
Dean Miller  
Emily Phillips Carretto  
Cliff Shelton  
Letty Wood

## April 26

Andrew Clark  
Emma Phelps  
Dave Wagner  
Sarah Williamson

## April 27

Brenda Holland  
Clint Hubbard, Jr.  
Tracy Johnson  
Lauren Oakey

## April 28

Jan Davis

## April 29

Vaughan Cruickshanks  
Pam Grady  
Jim Hughes, Jr.  
Alexander Macturk  
Laura Jane Straw

## April 30

Brent Leshar  
Diane Linderman

# Happy Anniversary!

## April 1

Debbie and Roger Hailes – 45 years

## April 4

William and Eleanor Nurney – 28 years  
Robert and Laurie Gray – 22 years

## April 5

Bill and Marge Rusher – 34 years  
Jim and Ann Wilson – 45 years

## April 6

Vanessa and Adam Jante – 7 years

## April 7

Susan and Tom Gilsdorf – 41 years

## April 8

Keith and Emily Hare – 20 years

## April 9

Rob and Sarah Collier – 15 years

## April 10

Skip and Cecil King – 44 years

## April 14

Steve and Nancy Bailey – 41 years

## April 19

Ed and Brenda Bass – 34 years

## April 20

Janice and Rusty Whitaker – 31 years

## April 22

Doug and Kristen Phelps – 25 years

## April 23

Ethan and Melanie Butterworth – 26 years

## April 26

Sarah and Brian Bain – 7 years

## April 28

Mallory and Joseph Manriquez – 8 years

## April 29

Chris and Ashley Stevens – 19 years