

4/30/20

Greetings Church Family,

Last Sunday, April 26th, we held our first-ever online Town Hall Meeting on Zoom. We had 55 participants signed in for this important gathering. I want to thank all of those who participated. I know that some of you were not able to attend this meeting. We want to make sure you were up to speed on what was happening at Wayne Hills during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this letter, I will share with you a brief overview of what was covered during the meeting as we explore the **State of the Church at Wayne Hills** in the latter part of April. In this letter, we will observe the way Wayne Hills is continuing to fulfill its vision and mission despite the challenges before us.

We began our meeting with a time of prayer and a reflection on Psalm 34:4-10. We were reminded that God hears our prayers and saves us amid trouble. I then shared about how **we moved from a state of reaction to one of intentional missional response** over the past month. The leadership of Wayne Hills deemed it a priority for us to reorient our response based on our vision and mission statement. **Our vision is** as follows: Wayne Hills Baptist Church is to reach the Valley by growing true disciples of Jesus who will go into the world and make an impact for Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). We are still called to make disciples and to go into the world as light and salt. We also felt it was important **to continue to fulfill our God-given mission**: Wayne Hills Baptist Church exists to glorify God by leading people to CONNECT to God in worship, GROW in their walk with Christ together, SERVE one another in ministry, and GO into the world to share the Gospel. It is within this mission that we discover how we, as a church, will fulfill the vision of God for our church. At the end of March, our leaders began to prayerfully consider how we will continue the mission of Wayne Hills in a coronavirus world. In the following paragraphs, you will discover our response is broken down according to the four key Watchwords: Connect, Grow, Serve, and God. A brief description is given of each keyword that is followed by a prescription of how we are applying it at Wayne Hills.

First, we must consider that **we are called to Connect to God in Worship** individually and corporately in a coronavirus culture. Personal prayer and devotions are more important than ever right now. Also, we know God has called us to "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25) even though we are not permitted to gather as we did before. This challenge has been met by offering Livestream Worship on YouTube. By the grace of God, our viewership over the past month has been the highest it has ever been since we began using this service. Since the development of Covid-19 in the middle of March, we have had 1965 views (separate devices logged in) of our services with over 2,475 hours of total viewing. This means that we are reaching many more people than we ever did before. The Gospel is going out despite our current difficulties!!

In addition to worship participation, the leaders of Wayne Hills were **concerned about financial health** during this season. We are praising God that the giving at Wayne Hills has remained both generous and consistent. For Wayne Hills to function according to our budgetary needs, we must bring in \$10,239 weekly or \$40,956 monthly. In March, our average weekly giving was \$9,939, but our monthly general fund offering total was \$49,693, which is well above our monthly budgetary needs. In April, so far, our average weekly giving is \$10,765,

and our total giving for the month is \$32, 294 for the general fund giving. I believe this shows that Wayne Hills is remaining steady in its giving. We are meeting the budget on most Sundays and are on track to meet our monthly budgetary needs. However, we need to be vigilant to continue to give to the Lord's work as we continue through this crisis. We are deeply thankful for every giver. You are making it possible for the Word of God to continue to go out and for lives to be transformed by the Gospel.

In the near future, we will be trying Drive-In Church as an additional option for worship on Sundays. We are waiting on the equipment to ship to us right now!

Second, **we must continue to Grow Together in Christ** via Small Groups despite the hindrances of social distancing. The early church continued to grow together despite significant pressure from the religious community and external persecution. They met for prayer, study, and fellowship often in homes and synagogues (Acts 2). At Wayne Hills, we have been able to utilize Zoom to maintain our meetings. Right now, we have ten groups meeting with over a hundred involved in regular prayer, Bible study, and online fellowship. A sample of these groups is as follows: Sunday School Classes, Small Groups—Men & Women, Youth—Middle & High School, AWANA, and our Deaf Fellowship. I am deeply thankful for Pastor Will in his leading and coordinating these groups. If you want to join a group, reach out to Pastor Will at will@whbc.net.

In addition to our Zoom Groups, we have been **utilizing Facebook Live** on both our Family Private Page and Our Public Facebook Page to teach and encourage our church family. Sunday nights, Pastor Will and I have been engaging our church family with prayer and an encouraging study on the Life of the Patriarch Jacob. Jacob wrestled with God, and we do too! **Join us Sunday nights** at 6:00 pm. Our Sunday nights have reached thousands of people in March and April. One evening God blessed us to reach over 2,000 people. Wow, it is incredible what God is doing! Wednesday evenings are for prayer and more Bible Study at Wayne Hills. Pastor Will and I are taking prayer requests and bringing general, specific, and a special emphasis prayer needs before our congregation. We are also studying through the Life of the Prophet Elijah! If you have a prayer need, please contact Kathy Dillow at whbc@whbc.net.

Third, the **importance of strong, unified leadership** during difficult trials in our church and world is essential. We are committed to **Serving One Another in Ministry** during this time. I am thankful that our leadership teams have continued to meet for prayer, planning, and general encouragement. Our elders, deacons, and Sunday School/Small Group leaders have been making regular, intentional efforts to reach every member of our church. Each has received an assignment based on our updated church directory. In these personal touch encounters, leaders are checking on the welfare of members and offering financial or benevolent need services to them. If you require such help, please contact the church office (540-943-2237 or whbc@whbc.net) and ask for our Benevolence Deacon Wayne Ainsley.

Another question that many have asked is on the **progress of our Bylaw Revision Team**. Dale Lenker has been meeting with the Team regularly via Zoom and has completed the first revision and sent it to the lawyers (Simms Showers). We want you to know that we are in constant dialogue with Simms Showers to maintain the forward progression of this crucial initiative. We will keep you all posted on the developments as we get information.

Fourth, the utmost importance of **going into the world to share the Gospel** is central to Wayne Hills. We have been going much lately! Our church community outreach "Come to the

Cross" has been wonderfully accepted by Wayne Hills and Augusta County. Good news travels fast, and the initiative of the old rugged cross on the hillside at Wayne Hills was an incredible addition to our property. The week before and after Easter Hundreds of people from all over streamed onto our church grounds to experience the love of Jesus in this great new way. Wow! There are so many Wayne Hills people to thank for this endeavor's success! I am so proud and thankful to be your pastor!!

Another vital outreach organized was the Blessing Bag Ministry at Wayne Hills. Debbie Debuque has successfully led our outreach team (Wayne Ainsely, Karen and Jerry Giles, and Sue Browning) over the past month. Together, they organize 30 bags full of food and household supplies for the family of Wayne Hills and many in our community. So far, we have handed out 25 bags and served 39 people with 7 Pickups and 14 deliveries. **PLEASE NOTE: Starting in May**, Blessing Bags will be available upon appointment ONLY. Please contact Debbie Dubuke (dubuke@comcast.net or 540-430-0031) if you would like to stop by the church or have a Blessing Bag delivered

Another way Wayne Hills is making an impact for Christ is the fabrication of headbands and facemask for healthcare workers and immuno-compromised individuals. This vital service has blessed many in our church family, healthcare workers in our county, and those who are most vulnerable to the virus. I am especially grateful for the Spradlin's and the Miller's, who have worked diligently to provide these compassionate services.

Soon, Wayne Hills is going to be providing bag lunches to the homeless of Waynesboro on May 4th. Please pray that God will continue to provide for us as we continue to reach out and carry the name of Jesus wherever we go.

One further note, Wayne Hills is striving to **adhere to the policies and guidelines of the governor and the president** as it pertains to church worship and fellowship practices. We will continue to let you know our Covid-19 response as we are instructed by these entities. Also, we are currently **seeking the counsel of a trusted cleaning company** to clean the church thoroughly in the weeks ahead. There will be some parts of the church that will be restricted because of this cleaning. Please bear with us as we strive to make every endeavor to make the transition from the quarantine back into regular church life in the months ahead.

Blessings in Christ,

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