

THE HOME PAGE

Volume No. 48

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Issue No. 12

ALL GATHERINGS AND ACTIVITIES ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

“For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.”

2 Timothy 1:7

With the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 crisis and at the request of the CDC as well as local and national health officials, all gatherings and activities at ESBC are suspended until further notice. This includes the suspension of Wednesday and Sunday activities. We are eager to resume all services as soon as possible, and will be monitoring the situation closely. Once it is safe to gather together physically, we will make an appropriate announcement at that time. Until then we will be undertaking efforts to remain close as a congregation through delivering of services online, encouraging virtual group meetings, and contacts and communication with our members.

The church staff is also heeding the advice of the CDC to practice social distancing. As long as it is safe to do so, one member of our ministry staff will be available in the church office to answer your phone calls. While we may not be available in the church office, we are available by cell phone and by email.

We will continue to monitor the recommendations from the CDC as well as government and health officials when making plans for the future. Any changes or developments will be communicated using our normal channels – our web site, our Facebook page, our weekly newsletter and eblasts. For more information on how to sign up for these channels, please email info@esbcgreenville.org.

EASTER ISN'T CANCELLED! HOLY WEEK SERVICES VIDEOS

While lots of events are currently being cancelled, Holy Week and Easter are not! While we may not be able to worship in person this year, we plan to have our Holy Week services online so we can worship together while we are apart. Our Palm Sunday service will be available for viewing at 9:00 this Sunday morning via our YouTube channel. On Thursday and Friday, April 9 and 10, the videos for our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Tenebrae services will be available starting at 6:30 pm on those specific days. Then on Easter Sunday, we can all celebrate the resurrection of our Savior during our Easter Celebration service, again available for viewing at 9:00 am on Sunday, April 12.

We hope you'll plan to join us and share these special services with your friends and family. We plan to have a worship guide available for your use during these Holy Week services. If you still haven't signed up yet to receive email communications from the church, including links directly to these special services, send an email to info@esbcgreenville.org today.

FROM THE PASTOR

The decision not to gather in person for Holy Week services was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made. It goes against every pastoral instinct I have. But I assure you this decision was made prayerfully and unanimously by our staff ministers and deacons. An invisible virus may stop us from gathering together for a time, but nothing can stop us from keeping the story of Jesus alive. We are determined to keep the story of Jesus alive, and to share the glorious good news of His life, death, and resurrection even though we cannot gather together in our spiritual home.

In recent days and weeks, I have been more impressed and inspired by our church staff than ever before. I have always known how blessed I am to work with such a wonderful staff team, but the recent crisis has only deepened my appreciation for my colleagues and friends on our church staff. We have all been forced to re-think the way we do our work, and some of us have even learned how to use technology in new ways. Some of us have proven that old dogs can learn new tricks. Ellen, Chuck, Lucy, Janice, Denise, and Bethany (in no particular order) have all shown an extraordinary measure of creativity, insight, dedication, and teamwork to find new ways to keep their ministries vibrant and also to keep our church family connected with each other and with God.

But what is true of our church staff is also true of our entire church family. Thank you ALL for your support, affirmation, encouragement, inspiration, and prayers during these trying times. I never cease to be amazed at how faithful and generous you are in your giving. It is incredible to me that, as of now, even after having missed three Sundays, our budget offerings are still above our budget requirements. But it is not just the way you have remained faithful in giving your money. The way you are caring for each other is so beautiful. Deacons are calling church families, the Senior Adult Ministry Council is staying in touch with our senior adults, our Homebound Visitation Team is staying in touch with our homebound members, even though they cannot visit them right now. Our Sunday School classes and small groups are meeting together by Zoom. Our Prayer Team is leading our church family to support each other through prayer.

All this is to say that we are still the church, and there are many ways to form a sense of community - - whether we are gathering in our buildings or scattered in our respective homes. We may have to be a little more creative than usual, but we are determined to keep our faith alive in this fearful world. Holy Week will be different this year, but it will come to us as a timely reminder that, because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we have nothing to fear.

These days are a vivid reminder that the church is not a place, but a people - - sometimes gathered, sometimes scattered, but always the body of Christ wherever we are.

God be with us till we meet again,
Stephen



LIVING THE GREATER WAY AT A DISTANCE: STAYING MISSIONAL

Over the last few weeks, we have all been making a lot of adjustments. “Social distancing” and “sheltering in place” are now part of our routine vocabulary. In our church life, we have added Zoom meetings and online worship services to our skill set. We are all learning new ways to stay connected to each other and to God.

And we are finding new ways to stay connected to our neighbors, too. As we keep our distance physically, it is more important than ever that we safely share our resources and shine the love of Jesus into our community and beyond. We are staying in contact with our mission partners and responding to their needs as they continue their ministries. Here are some recent examples of missional moments:

Triune Mercy Center

Our Triune Mercy Center Team was scheduled to provide a meal on Sunday, March 29. When Triune stopped serving hot food inside its facility, we engaged our caterer, Kim Stidham, to prepare bag lunches according to Triune’s instructions, and we fed 96 people on Sunday. And we are set to do it again this Saturday, April 4.

While communicating with Triune about delivering meals, its pastor and director, Deb Richardson-Moore, informed us of another opportunity to help. Triune has recently begun helping people who have been working and living in motels but have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus outbreak. For the most part, the shelters in Greenville are unable to take new residents, so, without assistance, these folks are facing life on the streets. Triune is working to help keep them housed in motels. Using funds designated for the Triune Mercy Center Team, we were able to make a significant contribution specifically earmarked for this relief effort.

Greenville Church Without Walls

Rev. Alfred Johnson, from the Greenville Church Without Walls, has been delivering pizzas to children in the Shemwood Crossing Apartment Community who might not otherwise get a weekday lunch while schools are closed. Alfred is delivering 40-50 pizzas a day, and our Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) covered two days’ worth at the beginning of this week.

Landwood Ridge

Our Apartment Ministry Team prepared over 50 “sunshine bags” filled with candy, notes, puzzles, and other small items to our senior friends and ministry partners at Landwood Ridge Apartment Community. We found a safe and socially distant way to collect and deliver the bags in cooperation with management at the apartment community.

These are just a few missional opportunities that we have identified and seized in the last couple of weeks. As stated above, we are staying connected to our mission partners and looking for ways we can help them as they minister to our community. If you would like to participate in our missional endeavors during this time, there are a couple of ways:

Contact Me

Email me at chuck@esbcgreenville.org; I will keep you posted of opportunities as I learn about them from our mission partners.

Continue Giving to ESBC

You can designate a financial contribution for “Coronavirus Relief” if you would like for a particular amount to be used in response to our mission partners’ needs as they arise.

Thanks so much for your continued giving and serving and praying. We are, indeed, in uncertain and unprecedented times, but I am confident that God will continue to provide as we seek to live the greater way together.

Chuck Emory

From the Minster of Youth and Recreation

Lucy Wilkinson (ext. 212) – lucy@ESBCgreenville.org

Weekly Meetings for Youth

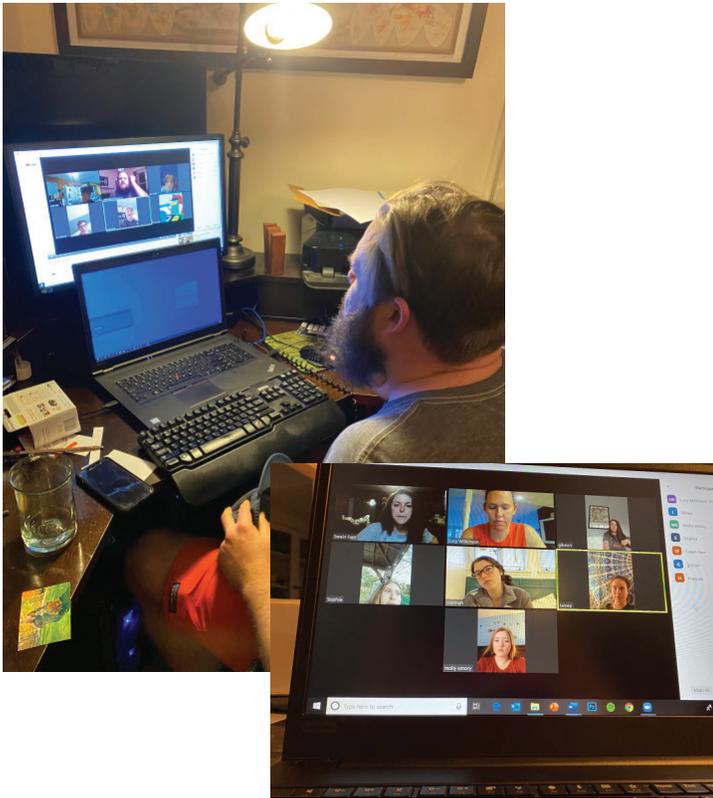
Our youth have been meeting twice a week using Zoom. I would love for all youth to join us in these small groups! Please contact me on how to connect with one of these groups.

Wednesday Nights Bible Study

Middle School Girls with Carrie and Lucy: 6:45 pm
High School Girls with Lucy: 7:30 pm
Middle/High School Boys with Tommy and Lee: 8:00 pm

Sunday School

Middle School with Crystal: 10:30 am
High School with Lucy and Todd & Debbie Wilklow-10:30 am



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

Janice Hinnant
April 3, 1995
25 years

Debbie Blume
April 15, 2007
13 years

NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION

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We will continue to mail the newsletter as long as it is safe for us to come into the church office. Please make sure you sign up for electronic delivery so you can stay in touch should we need to suspend the actual mailing of the newsletter.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Bobby and Pam Neal and family
upon the recent death of Pam's son, Jeremy Davis.

RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED

Veronica Blair

BUDGET REPORT

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Weekly Budget Requirements.....	\$28,228
Budget Gifts.....	\$16,066
Budget Requirements to Date	\$366,964
Budget Gifts to Date	\$399,015

EVENTS POSTPONED

Golf Tournament - October 31

EVENTS CANCELLED

Egg-Stravaganza Egg Hunt - April 4
Operation Inasmuch - April 25

PRAYER VINE MINISTRY

PRAYER VINE FOR URGENT PRAYER NEEDS

There are now three ways to access the church prayer vine.

1. Text or call Kathy Kincaid at 864-430-3521.
2. Email Frank Tedards at tedardsf@gmail.com.
3. Call Alver Maheras at 864-233-1047.



EARLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

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Ministry Assistant - Ellen Heyward

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Minister of Music and Worship - Janice Hinnant

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Minister of Preschoolers and Children - Bethany Hovis

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Director of Earle Street Academy - Shanna Johnson

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Minister of Administration - Denise Plumblee

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Minister of Youth and Recreation - Lucy Wilkinson

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EARLE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: The Home Page

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JOIN US IN PRAYER

The Prayer Team of ESBC encourages us to pray daily for the many needs and requests surrounding the public health situation. You are invited and encouraged to stop at 12:00 noon each day and join with others from our church family in lifting our prayers to our Father. Some prayers are listed below, but for other suggestions, please visit our website.



- All those in our community, nation, and world who have contracted the Covid 19 virus.
- All those in our church family who are health care workers and chaplains.
- The senior adults of our church and others who may be at high-risk of contracting the virus.
- For those in our church family who are quarantined and/or alone.
- The church staff as they make agonizing decisions in these unsettling times and as they lead and serve our church family from a distance.
- Leaders of our church who are helping our church family stay connected with each other and with God.

Sermon from Sunday, March 29, 2020
“Setting Our Minds”
Romans 8:6-11
by Stephen Clyborne

When you are a youth, you get a lot of unsolicited advice on almost every subject -- from parents, teachers, coaches, and even pastors. All my life, until my father died, he used to say to me, “You have so much to learn. You need to use your head for more than a hat rack. You need to use what little bit of sense you have.” When I was a teenager, I distinctly remember him saying to me over and over again, “You must be pretty smart to know at the age of sixteen what it took me over fifty years to learn.” When you are a teenager, you just grow to expect that the people who love you, and have lived longer than you, feel like it is their responsibility to pass along what they have learned. Their hearts are in the right place. They are just trying to help you avoid making some of the mistakes they made. They just don’t want you to make unforced mistakes that will, at best, delay, and will, at worst, prevent the achievement of your goals. And a lot of their advice is aimed toward helping you think clearly, reasonably, rationally, and intellectually about the choices you make. They just want you to gather as much information and understanding as you can so you can make the most informed decisions possible about your life. They just want you to use your mind responsibly. But how do you use your mind responsibly?

Some people’s minds are so open that they stand for nothing and fall for anything. Other people make up their minds, close their minds, and never learn anything new, never consider alternative viewpoints, and therefore, never grow in their understanding of themselves, the world around them, or the God above them. So how can we live in that healthy space between being too open-minded on the one hand and too closed-minded on the other? Well, the Scripture we have read today from the letter of Paul to the Romans gives us guidance.

Paul said that, in the end, what matters more than whether your mind is open or closed is how your mind is set, or focused. And according to Paul, there are just two choices with very different outcomes. You can set your mind on what he calls “the flesh,” or you can set your mind on the Spirit. One mind-set will lead to death, the other to life and peace (verse 6).

In the 1990s, a group of Washington children participated in an eight-year antismoking-campaign program. They were given all the right information and were educated about the effects of smoking. But the results were not impressive. Of the group that went through the program, 25.4 percent now smoke regularly. And of the group that did not go through the program—those who did not participate in the study—25.7 percent now smoke regularly. So the education campaign hardly made any difference at all. Our society has conditioned us to believe that believes education is the answer to our culture’s problems. And I am a big believer in education. But people need more than just new ideas or new information or new techniques to change bad behavior or to resist temptations. Paul said that it is by the Spirit that we gain life and peace.

There are two primary words in the New Testament that are translated “mind.” The first is what we usually think of when we think of the mind. It is the word that refers to the intellect. When Jesus said that we should love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind (Luke 10:27), the word He used refers to deep thought, using the brain and intellect that God has given you. In other words, we are to study and apply ourselves that we may gain wisdom and understanding and information. We are to learn all we can, gather as much knowledge as possible, stretch our minds to think new thoughts, ask more questions, probe more deeply, and listen as intently as possible. But that is just one way the New Testament uses the word mind.

The other way is the way the word mind is used in Romans 8. Though it is translated mind, it is an entirely different Greek word that is not referring to the intellect, but to an attitude, a way of thinking, a mindset. It is the word Jesus used when he rebuked Peter and told him, “You do not have the mind of God, but the mind of humans” (Matthew 16:23). It is the word Paul used when he wrote to the Philippians, “Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5-11). This Greek word is not referring to one’s capacity for thinking, but one’s way of thinking. Rather than translating this word as mind, some translations of the New Testament translate this word as attitude, mind-set, focus, or way of thinking,

And in the New Testament, there are just two ways of thinking: the mind-set of God (Father, Son, and Spirit) or the mind-set of humans, which Paul calls “the flesh.” In this passage, Paul says that the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace, but the mind-set of the flesh is death (verse 6). One way of thinking submits to God’s law, and the other way of thinking is hostile to God (verse 7). God is pleased with one attitude, but it is impossible to please God with the other attitude (verse 8). Those who have the mind-set of the Spirit belong to God; but those who do not have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to God (verse 9).

You know, the more you study and apply your intellect, the more complicated your life can become. The more you know, the less you know. The more you learn, the more there is to learn. If you are going to be a lifelong learner, then you have to keep your mind open. You have to stimulate your intellect. You have to consider new information and alternative viewpoints. You have to get out of your echo chamber long enough to at least consider alternative ways of thinking. You have to be willing to be challenged, to think new thoughts, to explore new possibilities, to stretch your mind. That is what education does for you. That is why your parents and teachers and coaches and ministers encourage you to study hard, apply yourself, read as much as you can, and make good grades. There is a sense in which our minds should be flexible.

(Continued on back.)

But this passage of Scripture reminds us that there is a sense in which our minds should also be set. A mind-set is the perspective or attitude that guides and informs our intellectual pursuits. Paul says that, as important as it may be to apply your mind in intellectual pursuits, the key to life is not having a high IQ. It is not making good grades or getting into the best colleges. The key to life is not to let your mind roam, but to set your mind on the Spirit. Paul said, "To set your mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (verse 6). And here he is not talking about your intellect, but about your attitude, your way of thinking, your mind-set. He goes on to say that if the Spirit of God dwells in you, and if Christ is in you, then God will give you life - - a life you never dreamed possible, a life you could never have achieved on your own. Real life is about setting your mind on the Spirit, submitting to the law of God, pleasing God through the righteousness of Christ, belonging to Christ.

It's tough out there. It is tough enough to be an old person like me. But I can only imagine what it is like to be a young person in this world. There are so many pressures to conform, to be popular, to be cool, to be smart, to be athletic, to be in good shape, to be attractive, to wear the right clothes, to make good grades, to drive the right car, to have the right friends, to prove your worth, or to get noticed on social media. But when it comes right down to it, there are only two ways to live. One is to set your mind on the flesh, and the other is to set your mind on the Spirit. One way is to try to gain the approval of others, and the other way is to receive the approval of God through the righteousness of Jesus.

In our lives, we will face many complex situations. It will not always be clear to us what we should do, what college we should go to, what classes we should take, whom we should date, who our friends should be, what career we should choose, or even how we should vote. The Bible just does not spell out specific guidance on those kinds of issues. That is why it is important for us to develop our minds and apply our intellects so we can make wise and informed decisions about the direction of our lives. But the Bible does make some things simple for us. The Bible says there are a lot of reasons why we can and should open our minds, but only two ways we can set our minds. And the mind-set we choose will make the difference between life and death.

Jesus said, we can set our minds on divine things or on human things. Paul said we can set our minds on the Spirit or on the flesh. And our mind-set, not our intellect, will determine everything that matters about who we are, who we will become, and what will become of us. The wisdom writer of Proverbs put it this way: "Trust in the LORD . . . or lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5-6). God's way or your way. Now it is getting really simple. Those are two very distinct mind-sets: trusting in God's ways or in human ways. The Bible says we will trust one or the other. Do you remember way back at the beginning of this sermon, when I told you that old people like me like to give unsolicited advice out of a heart of love to hopefully help you avoid some of the mistakes that we have made? Well, you knew it had to come sooner or later, so here it is. There is an old expression that some people are "set in their ways." Have you ever heard that? That means that some people have their minds made up and are set. Nothing is going to change their minds or their ways. Well, here is my advice. Actually, it is not my advice at all. It is the wisdom of Scripture. From cover to cover, the Bible teaches that there are only two ways to live. Your mind can be set in your own ways, in the ways of the flesh, in the ways of this world. Or your mind can be set in God's ways, in the ways of the Spirit, in the ways of Christ. And the reason this matters so much is because your mind-set will determine all your choices in life. And the way your life turns out will be the sum total of all your choices. There is an immediate transformation that takes place when we trust Jesus to save us, but there is also the ongoing work of the Spirit in our lives, which continually shapes us into the image of Christ.

Ironically, to be set in your ways can actually turn you into a person you do not ultimately want to be. But to be set in the ways of God, to have the attitude of Christ, to set your mind on the Spirit will give you life and peace. It is important to open your mind, but it is even more important to set your mind. And how you set your mind will determine how you live the rest of your life. Amen.

STAYING CONNECTED

Stay in touch with the church

- Check the website (www.esbcgreenville.org)
- Check our Facebook and Instagram pages (search for esbcgreenville and follow and like our pages)
- Subscribe to our YouTube channel (search for Earle Street Baptist Church)
- Congregational Care Email (email info@esbcgreenville.org and ask to be added)
- The Home Page weekly newsletter (email info@esbcgreenville.org and ask to subscribe)

Stay in touch with each other

- Call, text, and email people in your "sphere of influence," e.g., people in your Sunday School class or Midweek Recharge group; people who sit near you in church; people who sit at your dinner table on Wednesday nights
- Look through the church pictorial directory to remind you of people to contact