

Pacific CONNECTOR

HAWAII PACIFIC BAPTIST CONVENTION

Every Hawaii Pacific Baptist Church working together to be leaders in
IMPACTING GOD'S KINGDOM throughout the Pacific & Asia.

Working Together to be Leaders...
DURING A PANDEMIC



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Building the Kingdom

Small Steps At a Time

I pray that this edition of the Pacific Connector finds you physically and spiritually well and blessed.

Although I have heard the same adjectives describing the past months that you have listened to — unprecedented, unparalleled, unequaled, extraordinary — I would like to add another: unsurprised.

I am not referring to myself as being unsurprised because no one could have imagined the course of events over the past few months. In my wildest dreams, I would never have expected a global pandemic that forced the world into isolation, crashed global economies, and sent the church on a new platform of fulfilling the Great Commission. But our Father knew.

God was unsurprised by the past few months and He will be unsurprised in the coming months. As Creator and Sustainer of all things, He is accustomed to our panicked responses, our lack of faith, and our fear while He maintains His place of glory and honor. He waited on our rushed and scattered prayers and listened to every word. He is still attending to our cries, our anxiety, and expects more from us tomorrow. We stand to miss His power and presence within us unless we utilize our faith and allow Him to be our Father in Spirit and truth, and let Jesus be our Lord in all things.

We have witnessed many of you exercising great faith in these past days through your efforts to serve Christ during this crisis. You have

embraced the uncertainty and faced the difficulties, determined to show the power of Christ to a world searching for hope. God is honored in your faith and He has more in store for us in the days ahead.

We have been encouraged by many of you who have reached across town, the island, or the sea to assist neighbors, sister churches, and others worldwide. Your service in cooperative ministry is bearing God's Kingdom fruit and will continue to bear more as we proceed ahead. Your compassion proved Jesus' statement to His disciples when He said, "This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12-13)

In providing for us during this pandemic, God is preparing us for a more significant impact in our world than ever before. Let us commit ourselves to be faithful to His tasks ahead of us, knowing that our world will not be the same as it was previously. He has given us opportunities to advance His mission — let us not lose the ground we have gained. Let us rise to the call of leading forward in these days of confusion with the voice of God guiding us through. God is faithful.

Mahalo for the privilege and joy of serving you in our convention of churches. For our staff team, we appreciate your support of our ministries in service to you and our churches. We



Chris Martin

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remain ready to respond to your needs, coming alongside you as we navigate these days of uncertainty. God is faithful.

Continue to pray and strive for ways to serve God in obedience together. As always, your HPBC staff team is ready to assist you in any way that we can to advance and support your ministry. If we can serve you, please call us at 808-946-9581 or email me at chris@hpbaptist.net.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Martin".

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ABOUT THE COVER

The Lahaina Baptist Church Sanctuary becomes a staging ground for over 4000 boxes of food for the West Maui community for the past 7 weeks.



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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

During Days of Social Distancing

Churches in Hawaii, the Pacific, and Asia have done an amazing job of serving their congregations by providing a variety of music, scripture, sermons, and other worship elements online. Many pastors, worship leaders, staff, and other church leaders have climbed a steep learning curve to do so. There's been a great variety of how they've equipped their church families to worship at home.

Some have used live video via Facebook, YouTube, or another live streaming service. Others have prerecorded elements such as songs, Scripture

readings, prayers, and sermons with a link being sent to the church family. Many have also used online meeting platforms such as Zoom, which allow more face-to-face interaction. Some have taken advantage of live streaming services that allow users to pre-record the service, then "premier" it as a live event at the time the church would usually meet.

One thing they all have in common is the longing to gather again face-to-face.

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Freedom Village Church

Freedom Village Church in Seoul, South Korea was one of the first HPBC churches to go online. They suspended in-person worship over a month before Hawaii churches as South Korea experienced an early outbreak of Covid-19. Freedom Village Church is a merger of Seoul International Baptist Church and The Way Church. James Lynch is Pastor and Kerey Smith is an Associate Pastor.



Guam Christian Life Fellowship

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Guam Christian Life Fellowship holds its worship services on the Zoom Online Meeting platform. They use pre-recorded music from their worship team along with displayed lyrics.

In this photo, Chris Martin, HPBC Executive Director, preaches from his office in Honolulu at 10:00 p.m. Saturday night for the GCLF worship service at 6:00 p.m. Sunday evening in Guam.



Lahaina Baptist Church

Lahaina Baptist Church pre-records worship songs, other worship elements, and the message and "premiers" it on Sunday mornings on Facebook. Jay and Joy Wright's American Bully, Lilo, recognizes her favorite preacher even when he's preaching online. Jay Wright is pastor of Lahaina Baptist Church on Maui.



Engage Church

For Engage Church in Hilo on Hawaii Island, their worship service is provided online through Facebook Live. For their Easter Worship service, Pastor John Endriss had members from their band record themselves at home playing the same song. Then John mixed all of them together into one video with each person on a small part of the screen and shared that video with the congregation!



Waikiki Baptist Church

Waikiki Baptist Church also holds its worship services via the Zoom Online Meeting platform. In a recent online service, Pastor Andrew Large invited missionaries Erick and Colleen Underwood to bring a word of testimony all the way from Paris, France.



Kahului Baptist Church



Randy Pauley and Nick Tanaka of Kahului Baptist capture sermons from various locations. The first two Sundays of the stay at home orders, Pastoral Apprentice, Nick Tanaka, recorded Pastor Randy Pauley's sermons "with an empty church building backdrop, in part to highlight the odd/strange feeling of NOT gathering for worship."

Since then, they have recorded sermons from various outdoor locations on Maui. Pastor Randy said, "we hope to give people some measure of joy and a break from the routine as we preach a beautiful message (the gospel), with a beautiful backdrop (creation)." He added, "We will continue to preach from new locations each week until we can reunite with the church in person."

CHALLENGE, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND TRAINING FOR *Pastors & Church Leaders*

Chris Martin Hosts Multiple Online Pastors/ Leader Gatherings

Since late-March 2020, HPBC Executive Director, Chris Martin has been hosting a weekly pastors and church leaders gathering via Zoom. The purpose has been for fellowship, encouragement, resourcing, and prayer. International Mission Board (IMB) President, Paul Chitwood, joined the group one week and North American Mission Board (NAMB) President, Kevin Ezell, dropped in the following week. Both shared ways that Hawaii Pacific Baptists can pray for our missionaries in the field. 40 to 70 pastors and other leaders have participated weekly.



Paul Chitwood, IMB President, shares an update and prayer concerns.



Martin Chappell (outlined in yellow below) prays for Dr. Chitwood and IMB missionaries. Martin is Pastor of Calvary International Baptist in Bangkok, Thailand, and is a former IMB Missionary.

HPBC's Diana Ventura Provides Multiple Online Fellowship Opportunities for Wives in Ministry

Diana Ventura, HPBC Director of Women's Ministries, has been providing multiple opportunities for Wives in Ministry (WIM) to meet in small groups for fellowship, sharing, and prayer. This includes women from all over Hawaii, the Pacific, and Asia. E-mail diana@hpbaptist.net to learn how to be a part of this ministry.



65 Learn Best Practices for Online Small Groups

The stay-at-home orders have led to creativity in disciple-making, small groups, and fellowship. Churches have used Zoom, Google Meetings, Jitsi, and other online meeting platforms to maintain connections. Some have even started new groups online.

HPBC hosted an online training with Ken Braddy, LifeWay's Director of Sunday School. Ken and LifeWay Adult Ministry Specialists, David Apple and Alan Raughton shared Best Practices and Teaching Tips for Online Small Groups.



See page 10 for **Best Practices to "Create a Better Online Bible Study Experience"** and page 11 for **Best Practices to "Create a Safer Online Group Experience."**

How to Effectively Deploy Other Church Leaders

By Dr. Craig Webb

For pastors, stay-at-home regulations haven't meant less work, less stress, or more rest.

Many have been forced to make a hard and sudden pivot to provide online-only worship, virtual group connections, creative pastoral care, and innovative community ministry.

And without help, pastors are at risk of neglecting their primary calling of prayer and preaching the Word.

Those who have asked for and received help from deacons and elders are thriving and will see the churches that they serve bear fruit for the glory of God.

The early church faced a similar crisis where the need was greater than the apostles could handle without neglecting their primary calling.

So, they said, "Brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:3-4).

Church leaders such as deacons and elders are looking for ways to step up during this time. Many of them have or will make the time to serve their pastor, their church family, and their community.

And don't forget: Some have technological skills, knowledge, connections, and equipment they would love to use for God's glory.

While you may have been going it alone for the first few weeks, it's time to get help.

Pastors who haven't already done so should consider sharing the load with deacons and elders in the following areas:

1. Recording, editing, and online distribution of the primary worship service
2. Organizing and overseeing online small groups and online prayer meetings
3. Organizing and contacting every church member (phone or video call preferred) to ensure comprehensive pastoral care
4. Evaluating finances and making needed adjustments
5. Creating a platform for online committee and team meetings
6. Organizing, recruiting for, and leading community ministry

I serve through the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention which covers the Hawaiian Islands, Micronesia, the Samoas, and international churches in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines.

It's been wonderful to see the way pastors, deacons, and elders have worked together during this pandemic crisis.

It's been especially gratifying to hear how deacons, elders, and other church leaders have stepped up to take on new ministries in order to allow their pastors to focus on the Word and prayer.

Here are a few examples of how pastors are empowering their deacons and/or elders to be extensions of ministry during this critical season:

Pastor James Shiroma leads one church with two locations on the Island of Oahu, The Gathering in Mililani and Citywide.

He has focused on regular email communications to members, a daily Facebook live devotion and prayer gathering, and two live online services on Sundays.

His elders have taken on extra responsibility through the church's prayer team, contacting families, and being available to meet practical needs like grocery pickups for the elderly or those with high health risks.

"Having these leaders step up in this way has allowed me to focus on prayer and the Word," says Shiroma.

For Jon Elliff, pastor of Makakilo Baptist on the Island of Oahu, their deacons are small group leaders and ministry team leaders.

"For the deacons who are small group leaders, they are regularly checking in with group members and conducting online group meetings via Zoom," he says.

"Our deacon-led 'Helping Hands' ministry already serves our elderly. They have continued to meet the needs of our elderly during our stay-at-home period."

Elliff also reported that elders have helped contact church members to ensure their spiritual and physical needs are being met.

For Chris Eyre, pastor of Koza Baptist Church on the island of Okinawa, he and his deacon body prioritized contacting everyone in their database of church members.

Since Koza's membership is primarily made up of military families who move every three years, their church management system database was sorely out of date.

A team of deacons quickly did a database clean-up.

They used Ministry Grid's online training platform to get the rest of their deacons up to speed on how to use the system to access information and log their calls.

Deacons, elders, church staff, and community group leaders are currently calling every church member.

The pastors who are delegating leadership to deacons, elders, and other servants in the church report a sense of excitement about the next phase of their post-pandemic ministry.

May God use this pandemic crisis to unleash God's people for God's work for God's glory as they pray, disciple, proclaim the gospel, care for the body, and serve their community.

Dr. Craig Webb is the Assistant Executive Director for the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention and the Content Editor for LifeWay's Deacon Magazine. He and his wife, Barbara, live in Honolulu and have three grown children. He produced the Pastor's Today e-newsletter from 2003-2013 and has served as a pastor in Tennessee and Hawaii.

This article originally appeared on factsandtrends.net

RESPONDING **BOLDLY** TO NEEDS

During an Age of Fear

Churches on Maui Find Ways to Show the Love of Christ to Their Communities

According to Jay Wright, pastor of Lahaina Baptist Church, "The communities of West Maui and Kahului, together represent the second most affected communities in the United States for layoffs and job loss. It's my understanding that more than 80% of those that have lost their jobs have not even received unemployment. Our church desires to be the hands and feet of Christ standing in the gap between hunger and hope for West Maui."

LAHAINA

Lahaina Baptist's worship center is transformed to prepare for ministry.

(top photo) Wright said, "More than 4,000 boxes of food have been handed out, more than 600 bags of groceries delivered to our Kupuna (elderly) and Shut-ins, and countless drivers going throughout Lahaina to ensure people in need receive a box of food."

KAHULUI

According to Randy Pauley, Pastor of Kahului Baptist (Maui), through the partnership of Maui County Baptist Association churches and thanks to a connection through Pastor Jay Wright at Lahaina Baptist, we at Kahului Baptist Church have "held 5 distributions of food for a total of about 1,100 people."

(middle photo) Bill Staton, an Elder at Kahului Baptist on Maui gives instructions before one of the community food distribution events.

WAIIEHU

(bottom photo) Waiehu Community Church (Maui) provided perishable food items for a couple of hundred families in Waiehu's Hawaiian homes community as well as for a State housing project in Waiehu. Rocky Komatsu and Jay Haynes are co-pastors at Waiehu Community.



LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Life Christian Works with High School to Provide Food to Families

(top right) Life Christian Church (Oahu) with the help of Central Baptist (Oahu) served 180 families of Roosevelt High School. John and Gay Williams of HPBC Disaster Relief assisted. Shaw Okawara is pastor of Life Christian Church.



HAWAII CHINESE & LIVING FAITH

Hawaii Chinese and Living Faith Donate Face Shields

(middle right) Hawaii Chinese Baptist and their daughter church, Living Faith, worked together to receive donations from their church family members in order to purchase medical face shields. These were donated to local hospitals. To date, over 1000 face shields were donated. Pictured is Hawaii Chinese Baptist Pastor, Andrew Tong, presenting a case of face shields to Queens Hospital in Honolulu.



GUAM CHRISTIAN LIFE

GCLF Participates with Other Guam Churches to Feed Homeless

(bottom right) Guam Christian Life Fellowship (GCLF) pastor, Pancho Madrid, meets Tuesday morning for Bible study and coffee with a group of pastors and church leaders of like-minded churches in Guam. This group is now meeting online. They have recently been working together to provide meals on a weekly basis in a park in Hagåtña. According to Pastor Pancho, "Sharing the gospel is a primary focus." They have seen men and women come to Christ and follow in believer's baptism!



Best Practices that *Create a Better...*

Online Bible Study Experience



Create a Better Online Bible Study Experience

1. **Plan for a shorter teaching session than in a classroom setting.** If you are used to teaching a group in a classroom or living room, you're going to find a much different environment online. It may seem counter-intuitive, but when you're online, less is more. Cut your normal group session plans in half. Aim for a 20-minute Bible study experience, 25 minutes at most. People will check out, click out, and you'll wonder why people bailed on you. Attention spans will be lower, you are not able to engage people like you could in a face-to-face setting.
2. **Use "share screen" to introduce images and other content that enhance the study.** While people will enjoy seeing each other's faces, they will enjoy seeing interesting images, maps, charts, and other items you can share through your computer. Take full advantage of the "share" feature in online meeting tools. You'll engage your online group members more fully.
3. **Get the most out of your Personal Study Guide.** Because your meeting is taking place online, and because you may decide not to "share screen" and place images for people to view there (such as maps, charts, etc.), direct people's attention to the Personal Study Guide used by your group. There you can help them focus on an image, a question, a quote, or even the Scripture.
4. **Call on people in the online session to read and answer questions.** Online experiences are different than classroom or living room ones. To keep people engaged, ask them to read sections of Scripture, and be sure to ask them to respond to questions you pose. People's attention may want to wander, but you can redirect them and pull them back in.
5. **Ask everyone to mute their microphones if they are not speaking.** Because many of us are spending lots of time at home these days, our children are, too. To keep from becoming a distraction to your fellow group members, mute your microphone so that barking dogs and rambunctious kids are not picked up in background noise.

Safer Online Group Experience



Create a Safer Online Group Experience

1. **In your online tool settings, set up a meeting password to keep hackers out.** Online meeting tools like Zoom have a setting that can be put into action. You won't be able to do this from your calendar when you set up an online meeting. You'll want to go to your Zoom account and view your scheduled meetings. Open a scheduled meeting and turn on the password requirement. Hackers will hate this.
2. **In your online tool settings, don't allow screen sharing (hackers can post inappropriate images).** Some groups have reported that a hacker was able to share his or her screen with the group, and it wasn't an image for the faint at heart. Can you imagine people's disgust (and distraction) when a sexually explicit image suddenly appeared during a Bible study? In Zoom settings, change this to "Host Only" sharing.
3. **In your online tool settings, don't use virtual backgrounds (hackers might post inappropriate images).** It has also been reported that hackers can wiggle their way and share an inappropriate image if you are using those delightful virtual backgrounds...you know....the Golden Gate Bridge or other famous places. If you're tempted to share those images, don't.
4. **Never show your meeting ID in social media.** You might be tempted send out that ID on Facebook. Please don't! If a hacker comes into contact with it, you'll have an unwanted guest that could destroy your meeting. Send your meeting ID to your group members, but allow them to invite friends they trust.
5. **Disable file downloads.** As the host, be sure that you do not allow file downloads. This will prevent malware from finding its way into your computer, and a hacker would have a difficult time sending a file to the group members during the meeting (something that might contain inappropriate images).
6. **Disable the "Join Before Host" feature.** If you don't turn off this option, and if you as the host can't start the meeting because you've been detained (or maybe you forgot you had a meeting) then the first person who joins the meeting automatically becomes the host and has control over your meeting.

SOMETHING TO Celebrate

GCLF Affirms Pancho Madrid as Pastor on Their 2nd Anniversary



Pastor Pancho Madrid was installed as the permanent pastor of Guam Christian Life Fellowship (GCLF) on Sunday, March 15, 2020. He and his wife Ahyen have been serving GCLF since their inception two years ago. He has been serving as the interim pastor. Visit gclf.gu to learn more about GCLF.

Pastor Ed Perez (far left) of Tamuning Christian Fellowship represented the Baptist Association of Micronesia (BAM), led the installation, and brought the charge at the special occasion.

Robinson to Serve as 1st Deacon of Waiehu Community

On Sunday, April 26, Waiehu Community Church (Maui) affirmed Chris Robinson as their first deacon. As a deacon, Chris will primarily be responsible for assisting the pastors through coordinating care for the physical needs of those within our church and our community. Chris is a local boy from Maui. He's married to Yvette, and together they have two grown daughters, Hi'ilei and Kamalei. Rocky Komatsu and Jay Haynes are co-pastors at Waiehu Community Church.



Kahului Baptist Turns 75

The First Baptist Church of Kahului (Maui) was formally organized on April 22, 1945. In June of that year, the name would be changed to Kahului Baptist Church. Randy Pauley is Pastor of Kahului Baptist.



FBC Wahiawa Pastor Completes the MTS Program

In 2017 when HPBC Executive Director Chris Martin introduced online degree programs in partnership with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) Steve Gray, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wahiawa, was one of the first to sign up.

Pastor Gray started the Masters of Theological Studies (36 credit hours) in the Spring of 2018 and is scheduled to complete his prescribed coursework in May 2020. According to Gray, it was a challenge to get back into the rigors of academia. Being a student again required him to be more disciplined in his free time. He averaged 2 courses per semester (6 credit hours) which required 12-15 hours a week of lectures, reading, and writing. This was in addition to meeting the needs of his congregation. It was his love for learning that motivated Gray to complete his coursework.

Attending classes at SWBTS was not new to Gray. He earned a Masters of Music degree in the 80s and was ready to expand his theological foundation. Gray added that his recent studies gave him a better grasp of scripture and has strengthened his ministry. His second round at Southwestern Seminary was been rewarding and he would encourage any pastor considering further education to pursue it.

Pastor Steve Gray and Dee Ann have served FBC of Wahiawa since 2011. Prior to FBC Wahiawa Gray served churches in Texas, Kentucky, Alabama, and Florida.



Life Christian Church Celebrates 5th Anniversary via Zoom Meeting





The February Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Missions Celebration was well attended by men, women, and students. This event brought the opportunity to share how Hawaii Pacific Missions impacts our convention. The Oahu event reached 200 people representing Oahu, Maui, and Kauai. The Big Island event was hosted at Waikoloa Baptist Church where 80 people gathered representing seven churches.



WMU Annual Meeting on Hawaii Island, Waikoloa Baptist. Jay and Kathy Shafto have served with IMB for over 25 years and currently serve in the Congo. The Shaftos shared how they reach their people group through storytelling.

WMU Council Meets to Set 2020 Offering Goals

The WMU Council met April 18 via Zoom to set their offering goals for the Sue Nishikawa and Lottie Moon Offerings.

The 2020 Goals are:

Sue Nishikawa Hawaii Pacific Missions Offering: \$130,000
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering: \$250,000

WMU Annual Meeting on Oahu, Honolulu Country Club




Rosalie Hunt, daughter to missionaries in China, is a passionate student of history, focusing on the lives of leading women who have shaped missions. Rosalie is an author and speaker that reminded us to pursue our passions because God has uniquely created us.

HPBC Staff Team Gathers Daily to Pray for Pastors and Churches

Did you know that every weekday morning at 8:30 a.m. HST, your HPBC staff team gathers for prayer by Zoom to pray for you? Dawn Akutagawa and Lisa Tabudlo, HPBC Ministry Assistants, keep an updated list of churches and missions with the names of pastors and wives. We get updates on and pray for five each morning. To include a specific prayer for you or your church family please e-mail info@hpbaptist.net. You are loved and prayed for!





Preparing for Your Church to Reopen: 4 Suggestions

by Trevin Wax

Across the country, state governments are setting dates for re-opening businesses and other parts of the economy in phases. What will church life look like during this “in-between” season? What is involved with reopening the church and gathering for worship?

Here are four suggestions for pastors and church leaders thinking about how best to minister in the months ahead.

1. Watch your heart and note your fears.

Many pastors feel a more acute sense of their inadequacy in ministry these days. The concerns vary:

- Will people get used to sitting on the couch in their pajamas watching church on livestream? Will people still want to gather?
- I wonder if people in my congregation are jumping into other livestream services and hearing pastors who preach better than I do. Will we lose church members after this?
- Our financial situation is precarious. I'm not sure if the church will be able to afford all our staff, even me.

Some of these fears may be overblown. It's possible that many church members will gain a newfound appreciation for gathering after this crisis passes (even if we're many months away from that), leading to an eventual increase in church attendance. Technology is a blessing for these times, but we all know it's insufficient. We have an inner longing to gather as the body of Christ. All of us are missing face-to-face interactions. We may want to gather more once this season is over, not less.

Regarding live streaming and podcasts, your people know of other church services and probably listen to other preachers already. The good news is, the quality of preaching or the style of worship isn't the only or primary factor that goes into church membership.

Regarding finances, the fears are likely not overblown. Many pastors may be underestimating the economic effect of this crisis and the long-term effects.

These areas of anxiety are real. But remember this: you are not in ministry because you are adequate, but because you are called, and the One who has called you knew you would be in this season when he placed you in his service. Watch your heart, take your feelings of inadequacy to the Lord and let them develop in you a more desperate dependence on his power.

Then watch what he will do.

2. Adopt the mindset of 'creative carefulness' as you consider returning to church.

We won't be going back to normal any time soon, even if the economy reopens and people go back to work. Many people were quarantining and self-isolating before government restrictions came into effect a month ago. That won't change for some people just because government officials say it's safe to emerge from our homes.

This means no one should think we can just flip the lights back on and church will resume like before. Just as the economy is reopening in phases, so will our churches. We'll have to get creative in how we mitigate the risks associated with the spread of the coronavirus.

- Will we start by regathering community groups (with ten or less) in homes to watch the worship service on livestream and do Bible study together?
- What steps can your congregation take to implement social distancing in your sanctuary?
- Will your church host multiple services at first, with people spread apart in smaller groups within the sanctuary?
- How do you free people up to not take on necessary risks, for example, older adults who may need to remain quarantined longer?
- How do we continue to minister to those who would be safer at home?

Ken Braddy, a leader at LifeWay, has compiled an excellent list of questions church leaders should consider as they move forward in these times.

Creativity and carefulness matter as we seek to implement new policies and procedures, depending on the size of the church or the region we are in. I talked with a pastor in a larger church this week, and their leaders have a plan for what it would look like if smaller groups were the only groups that could meet, while the large group gathering would have to remain canceled for the rest of the year. They hope the situation improves so that they can scrap that plan, but foresight in developing plans for multiple scenarios will be important for leaders in the days ahead.

3. Extend grace to church members and leaders who reach different conclusions.

Some people will still be fearful of large crowds, so churches may have reduced attendance for a while. And some may think it's time to gather all

together again like before. Show grace to church members who may think your policies unwise, on whichever side, and remind them that you're trying to make the best decisions for everyone. (LifeWay Research has a free resource to help you survey your congregation in order to discern the perspectives of your people.)

Show grace to other church leaders, as well, who may reach different conclusions regarding the mitigation of risk. You and your team will need to prayerfully make decisions on a lot of ideas and opinions.

4. Don't miss the opportunity to reinforce what is essential.

We have the chance right now to change the way we think about church connection and attendance. We must move beyond the “Let's count how many people came and sat in the pews on a Sunday” as a metric for the health of our church. The pandemic reminds us that church health must extend to connection that goes beyond the worship service.

What's more, as we are likely to see declines in giving, we will soon decide what cutbacks are necessary; what ministries or projects will need to temporarily halt; what budget line items need to be reconsidered. Constraints can clarify. They can help us refocus on what is most necessary.

How do we continue ministry with fewer people or less finances? Which ministries are essential? How do we minister differently, with less, going forward, trusting God to help us shepherd our sheep well?

As we think through reentry into church life, let's be wise, bold, creative, and hopeful in what we implement moving forward, as a demonstration of our desire to love God and serve our neighbors.



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Hawaii Baptist Academy and Hawaii Pacific Baptist Churches Donate Meals to Shelters Helping Meet Increased Needs During COVID-19

by Christina Yasutomi, HBA

HONOLULU - Hawaii Baptist Academy (HBA) and several Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention (HPBC) churches on the island of Oahu, are helping to meet a growing need for more meals at two homeless shelters in Honolulu. Prior to COVID-19, various churches and organizations, including HPBC churches, provided one meal a day to shelter occupants at the Next Step and Keahou Shelters. But with the state mandate to shelter-in-place, the shelters recognized an urgent need to provide an additional meal to ensure that their homeless guests do not leave the property in search of food.

"By providing more meals at our shelters, we will encourage our homeless guests to stay and shelter-in-place. Not only will we be following the state order, but we will also be doing our part to make sure that the coronavirus stops spreading in our communities," said Kapua Tani, community support coordinator for Next Step and Keahou Shelters. "We are sincerely thankful to Hawaii Baptist Academy and the HPBC churches for their support."

Nearly 200 lunch meals are prepared and delivered daily by HBA's chefs. Funding and resources to provide the meals also come from the school and generous members of its community. Participating HPBC churches that serve and contribute to the Next Step and Keahou Shelters are OlaNui, Olivet Baptist Church, and Waiialae Baptist Church.

"I'm very grateful that we are able to help those in need during this unprecedented crisis. It's wonderful that we're able to use resources already available to us, especially our talented and hardworking chefs. We also appreciate the support we've received from our churches and families," said Ron Shiira, president of Hawaii Baptist Academy.

HBA anticipates serving over 8,000 lunch meals while its campuses are closed due to the shelter-in-place order. The cost of providing 10 meals is \$30 per day. Donations are being accepted online at hba.net.

(photo) Hawaii Baptist Academy chefs, left to right, BJ Delima, Placer Dayang, and Jensen Manuel, deliver meals to Next Step Shelter in Honolulu. The school is partnering with several churches from the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention to provide additional daily meals at the shelter, and also Keahou Shelter, so occupants follow the state mandate to shelter-in-place.

About Hawaii Baptist Academy

Since 1949, Hawaii Baptist Academy has been preparing students in grades K-12 for success. Qualified, caring teachers, provide a safe, nurturing environment for students to learn, grow, and explore. A strong academic curriculum prepares students for college and life. A Christ-centered program assures students they are loved by God and encourages them to grow spiritually and to serve others. Co-curricular activities build self-confidence and leadership skills. For more information, please visit www.hba.net.