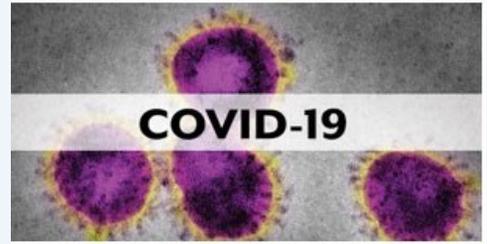




# Connections — April 2020



**Our activities are on hiatus in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. See Update on Page 2.**

*Church offices are open. Sermons are online and on Facebook*

## FBCC Christian Academy selected as name for private school

By Margo Perez  
Newsletter Editor



The private school council selected FBCC Christian Academy as its name. The Church Council approved the name, approved serving Pre-K4 to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and approved using a survey to decide how high the interest is for the grade levels. The survey has been set up and there has been much interest. The handbook has been prepared and has been approved by the Academy's Council. It will be presented to the Church Council for approval. The Academy Council elected Pat Becker as Chair, Margo Perez as Vice Chair and Linda Weber as Secretary. Hiring of an Administrator will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

**Please share the following with your friends, family and work colleagues in the area.**

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A PRIVATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

First Baptist Church of Castroville is considering opening a private Christian school in Fall 2020. It tentatively would serve 4-year-olds through fifth grade. We are trying to survey the interest in our community.

If you would be interested (with no financial obligation), please send your name, email and phone number with your child's name and the grade level he/she would enter to [fbcca\\_waitlist@yahoo.com](mailto:fbcca_waitlist@yahoo.com).

Please watch our website ([www.fbccastroville.com](http://www.fbccastroville.com)) link for updates.

*From left, Margo Perez, Pat Becker and Linda Weber*



### WATOTO HAS BEEN CANCELED

Sadly, when we decided not to meet on March 29, that meant canceling the Watoto Children's Choir. They had been traveling the nation, but eventually were waiting at a camp outside Dallas as more churches canceled, according to our coordinator, Claudia Williams. Then we got word that the Watoto leaders decided it was best for them to return to Africa because no one could predict when this crisis would pass.

To help them, since they travel and present their story to raise funds for their Watoto community, the Finance Committee is sending \$2,000 from the Widows and Orphans Fund that some people designate to in online giving to the group. If you would like to add to that amount, please go online and designate your gift or send a check to the church office and designate it to Watoto.

### EASTER HELICOPTER EGG DROP CANCELED

This tradition, begun in 2014, has been a highlight of Easter morning for hundreds of children who come to our campus. We have shared the Gospel message as they await the helicopter.

Unfortunately, with the schools' decision to delay re-opening until at least April 27, we cannot have that huge crowd here.

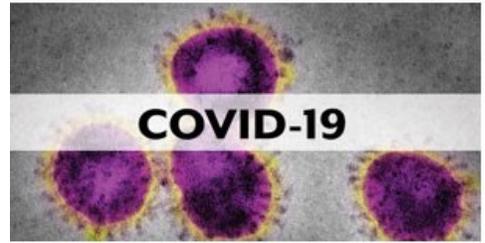
If you took eggs to fill with candy, you can bring them back to the church. If you have candy that you don't want to give to your family, Children's Minister Debra McDonel can use them as treats throughout the year.

### PASTOR ADS ARE POSTED

The Pastor Search Team has continued its work via conference calls. The advertisement for our Senior Pastor is now available on the Baptist Standard website, in the printed "Common Call" magazine, through the Minister Connection at the Baptist General Convention of Texas and on the Truett Seminary website.

It refers prospects to our website, where they will find the job announcement and a profile of our church. The team has already received more than a dozen resumé's in the first week it was posted.

# FBCC continues to minister during Coronavirus pandemic



By Ginger Carnes  
Communications Team Leader

Unprecedented. Unpredictable. COVID-19, the Coronavirus, has put us all in situations we've never experienced.

No one could have predicted that we would have only worshipped together on two Sundays in March 2020 and could not promise that we would be together for Easter Sunday.

Our leadership and staff have been making decisions without knowing what comes next. We've been using technology we've never tried before, and we've communicated constantly with our congregation through email, texts, social media and phone calls.

When Pastor Ben Craver and Deacon Chairman Andy Carnes started getting questions about whether we would meet on March 15 – due to school districts extending Spring Break, government leaders prohibiting large gatherings, Fiesta being postponed, and hoarding evident in grocery stores – there was a flurry of email traffic among many of our members before the final decision was made on Saturday morning to cancel services for the next day.

At the same time, they called a meeting for Sunday afternoon of Church Council, Deacons and staff to determine the next steps. Pastor Ben and Andy brought two options – meeting in two services with smaller crowds in each and sanitizing the sanctuary and restrooms between the two services or canceling all services and activities. Fifteen leaders shared their thoughts and voted overwhelmingly to not have services or weekly activities through March 29, which was the date school districts were using as their next decision date.

**The leadership group decided that the offices would remain open because we must continue to minister to the community and our congregation.** Pastor Ben prepared video messages and a sermon that could be shared on Facebook and on our website. We determined that trying to get the Praise Team to videotape would involve also getting the audio-visual team up at the church and could put all at risk of infection.

**Meanwhile, we are paying our employees and have a building payment to make, but very, very, very few people have sent their tithes and offerings to the church.** We ask you to prayerfully consider giving online through our website or mailing a check to the church. The Finance Committee is “meeting” virtually to determine how to best manage our financial obligations.

Missions Minister Tina Santee has continued her energetic leadership by providing hygiene items, practicing social distancing, and distributing vouchers for the March 19 Food Truck from a canopy outside the office building. She also has managed smaller food distributions during this time when families are home and sometimes without a paycheck.

Other staff members have publicized our ministries and responded to individuals who have approached the church for help, including providing that elusive toilet paper!

You will read elsewhere in this newsletter about how Children's Minister Debra McDonel is using their Facebook pages for AWANA and the Children's Ministry to teach Sunday School lessons and share links to keep kids entertained while learning about Jesus.

Student Minister Jeromy Kusch has shared some devotionals on The Movement's Facebook page, helped organize the food distributions and is conducting Bible studies for the youth through the Facebook page.

It is of primary importance for us to not only reach our community but also reach within our congregation to make sure we are helping each other. “Any crisis provides an opportunity to show the love of Jesus to our friends,” says Pastor Ben. “One simple approach is to check on them. Sunday School teachers can act similarly with their students. Let's think strategically about ways to communicate that we are here to help.”

**Pastor Ben also calls for us to “join other Texas Baptist churches in praying for an end to the spread of the virus, for the healing of those affected, the safety of health care professionals and first responders, and for God to send revival through His people that we might boldly and lovingly share the faith.”**

**Because of the changes from government and schools coming day by day, the leadership group met on March 29 via conference call and decided to say we are canceling services and activities "until further notice."**

We are mainly monitoring the school districts and following their lead. This necessitates canceling the Helicopter Easter Egg Drop on Resurrection Sunday.

Again, this situation is unprecedented and unpredictable. We will get through this because our Awesome God is in control!.

## MONTHLY FOOD TRUCK CANCELED

The San Antonio Food Bank has canceled all food trucks until further notice because the stores that provide items to them do not have items to donate. We do plan to have small food distributions on Wednesdays through the Daily Bread ministry.

# Children's Ministry continues to remain active

By Debra McDonel  
Children's Minister

While we are closed, our Children's Ministry will continue. For the health and safety of our Children's Team, we have asked them to practice social distancing and continue to work from home. We will continue online Children's Sunday School, Teachers will post to our children's Facebook page lessons and activities for the week. Parents, you may follow up online your child's answers or send us pictures of your child working on Sunday School activities. Our Children's Church will be conducted the same way on Sunday. Find us on Facebook @ FBCC Children's Ministry.

Our Awana Clubs will remain active as well. Clubbers may work on their books at home with parents and may call Charlie, Cheryl, Lindsay, Lilly or Debra. We will also post to our Awana Facebook page; you may find us @ FBCC Awana Club's.

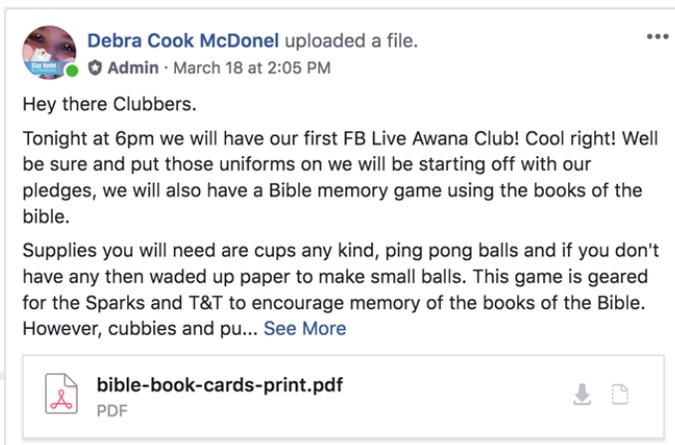
We encourage families to prayerfully pray for our community and the COVID-19 spread to stop. As parents in times like these, we need to be aware of our actions as our children are watching. My personal recommendation is to have a family sit down and talk to your children. Open in prayer and ask God to lead your conversation. Remember to be age appropriate with your children and be honest. For children, secrets are more scary just as the unknown is for us at times. It's okay if you do not know all the answers, so tell them, "Sweetie, I don't know, but I do know that God is in control." Follow up with scripture and allow your children the opportunity to ask questions.

Here are a few resources available to keep your children In the word while having fun at home.

- <http://us-en.superbook.cbn.com/>
- <https://www.kidsofintegrity.com/>
- <https://www.adventurebible.com/>

## Sample Facebook Posts

Feel free to call:  
830-931-9103 Carnes Family  
830-212-1703 Debra McDonel



# Food distribution continues during coronavirus crisis



On March 19, we distributed over 12,000 lbs. of food to the community through the San Antonio Food Bank's monthly truck on the third Thursday. We usually serve 120 families, but we served 150+. What an amazing turnout of volunteers! What an amazing church family!



*Volunteers practiced social distancing to stay safe.*



*Prayer circle before the vehicles arrived.*



*Volunteers used gloves to stay safe.*

**First Baptist Church of Castroville**  
1408 Alsace  
PO Box 1056  
Castroville, TX 78009

**Phone: 830-538-3220**  
**E-mail: [fbccastroville@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fbccastroville@sbcglobal.net)**  
**Website: [www.fbccastroville.com](http://www.fbccastroville.com)**  
**Facebook: First Baptist Church of Castroville**

**This newsletter is the leadership's way to keep you in the loop. To submit items, send to Margo Perez at [Margo9326@yahoo.com](mailto:Margo9326@yahoo.com).**

**Deadline is the Sunday after the monthly Business Meeting. The newsletter is published the first Sunday of each month. It is sent via e-mail and it is available on the What's Happening tab of the church website. Printed copies are available in the Worship Center foyer.**