

# Hendricks Herald

HENDRICKS AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

AUGUST 2020



## A Letter from Our New Pastor

By B. J. Hutto

*"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:3-5)*

Friends,

I wanted to write to you today in order to once more express our family's excitement over the fact that, in mere weeks, we will be heading to Jacksonville and joining the HAB family. At times there seems to be a mountain of details that will need to be attended to between now and then, but Rebekah, Hannah Ruth, Elijah, and I all know (and I bet that

Archie [the dog] does too) that on the other side of that mountain is a good and gracious place, a good and gracious people. Truly, a home. As we contemplate our future with all of you, we know ourselves to be blessed. And honestly, is there any greater feeling on God's earth than to know one's blessedness?

As we reflect over these last few months, we are grateful for the work that the search committee has put in, we are grateful for the friendship that has been offered to us by the church's staff—the relationships that are already being formed—and we are grateful for the trust that the congregation has placed in us, and in me, to join them in the good, hard work of furthering God's kingdom and serving God's children here in Jacksonville and beyond. Some of that work is already in motion, and I look forward to the opportunity to learn more and more about how the members of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church care for their neighbors and, indeed, care for one another. Other aspects of that work, however, are yet to come into focus, and I dearly look forward to discerning with all of you what God's Holy Spirit has in store for our church in the years to come.

And so for now—in this in-between time of our life together in ministry and, indeed, in this in-between time of our world that is so largely defined by COVID—I would ask that all of you join me in praying for that act of discerning God's will for HAB. I ask that you pray not simply that God would speak to us and let us know what that will is—for our God is always and everywhere speaking—but instead that when God speaks to us we would be listening, and that in our listening we would hear, and that in our hearing we would find within ourselves the courage and the faith to respond. That will be my prayer, and I hope that it might be yours as well.

*"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart. . . . For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best. . . ." (Philippians 1.6-10).*

In closing, thank you again for these gifts that I and my family have received. And thank you also for the opportunity to use my other gifts, to come alongside and serve with you here in Jacksonville. It will be work, and at times it will be hard work. However, at the same time it will also be good work. And honestly, is there anything better than the opportunity to join in good, hard work? Particularly when it is in the service of something as worthy as the kingdom of our God? And, even more so, when it is shared amongst friends?

Kindest regards,  
B. J.

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**Matt Cook**, Ph.D., Interim Pastor • **Thomas M. Shapard**, M.Div., M.M., Minister of Music & Worship  
**Britt Hester**, M.Div., Minister of Youth and Christian Education • **Claire Kermitz Chinn**, M.Div., Minister of Children and Mission  
**Vickie M. Landers**, B.B.A., Church Administrator • **H. Kendell Smith**, Dip.C.M. Minister of Music Emeritus



## A Report from the HAB COVID-19 Task Force

By Matt Cook, Interim Pastor

Greetings from Texas! If you think it's hot in Florida, I will quickly point out to you that on the day I got home to Dallas it was 104 degrees. I doubt anyone has ever said, "I can't wait to get back to Jacksonville where it's cool," especially not in July, but I just did.

Before I get back in town, however, I wanted to update you on the work of the HAB COVID-19 Task Force. As you know, at the beginning of June we held our first meeting. Back then we were cautiously optimistic that we could enter a new phase of pandemic response in the month of August. The day before we met in early June, Duval County had 30 new cases of COVID-19 reported with a 2.5% positive rate for all tests.

Unfortunately, those numbers didn't hold up. Less than a month later, we held our second meeting. The numbers in Duval County on that day were 820 new cases with a 16.8% positive rate for all tests. That's a huge and scary difference. Many churches' re-gathering plans are tied to that positive rate. Most of the churches who are factoring that number in focus on a 5% positive rate. I've seen some others aim for 7.5% and a few who've said that 10% is not great but acceptable—but 16.8% is a huge number, especially with overall case load being so high. **At the advice of the medical professionals on our Task Force, and based on those numbers, the Task Force unanimously concluded that we are not yet ready to regather.** I wish I could tell you something different.

**Having said that, we are still moving ahead with the planning and logistical work for re-gathering so that when those numbers come back down we are ready.** At our first June meeting, we entered into what we are calling Phase 1 of regathering. In Phase 1, our children and youth ministries (and by extension our mission partner Little Friends, who utilizes our facilities) have been given freedom to carry out safe forms of gathering. Each ministry will carry out those plans differently, but I'm confident in the level of forethought and intentionality that is going into the ways that each of these ministries are operating. I should also add that part of Phase 1 also means that these ministries are using their judgment about how/if they are carrying out their respective ministries. Phase 1 is not a guarantee that these ministries will operate, just the freedom to do so appropriately as conditions warrant.

Our next phase of re-gathering (Phase 2—catchy, I know) will focus mainly on worship, but also allows for a handful of other activities to take place. You'll receive a more detailed version of what I'm describing generally in a few weeks, but in general terms Phase 2 uses the benefit of our architecture (separate buildings) and divides different parts of what we do out into these buildings to keep different subsets of our church separate. For instance, our two partner international congregations will have their own dedicated space to utilize, as will Little Friends, and the other groups that we expect to need space while the pandemic is still going on.

As for worship, the basic framework of the plan is to have two identical services (one early, one late) and operate at less than 50% capacity. We will only seat every other pew, and each pew will be divided in two with you (and your family) sitting socially distanced on one side of the pew, with another individual/family on the other side of the pew. This prevents anyone from having to move past someone else to be seated (unless they are part of your household). We will have a team that will help direct people to seating and that will also "direct traffic" so that we can limit the number of people who are in the narthex or aisles at any given moment.

There are two other things I also wanted to share that are important. The first is about the church office. **Part of our "separate buildings strategy" will be to keep the church office as a closed environment in Phase 1 and Phase 2** (and potentially until there is a medical intervention that effectively ends the pandemic). This doesn't mean that there will be no one in the office. The entire staff team has been using the office periodically, and Vickie and Laraine have been there fairly frequently. What it does mean is that we are developing alternative protocols for the activities that would have required physical interaction between staff and non-staff in the office. In very candid terms, this is to limit risk for Vickie and Laraine. They haven't pushed us for it, but the Task Force felt a significant responsibility to do what we can to protect them.

**Second, effective immediately, HAB will require the use of masks on campus for the duration of the pandemic.** We are all well aware of the disagreements that are out there about masks. It is certainly not our intent to exacerbate those disagreements. Speaking for myself, I have no doubt that we will look back after the pandemic is over and discover that there are some things we did that may not have been necessary. Of course, I'd quickly add that there will almost certainly be things we didn't do that actually were necessary. That's the hard part about this pandemic. So much is UN-certain, and none of us are experts at it because the last one we had of this magnitude was more than a century ago. But it is precisely because things are uncertain that the Task Force felt that an abundance of caution was in

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(Matt, continued)

order. Having said that, if you have a question or concern about masking, the office being closed, or any of what I've shared here, then please contact me or any member of the Task Force, and we'll be happy to discuss it with you.

There's a good chance the logistics of all of that are still a little fuzzy even after reading what I wrote. That's okay. **We are the process of putting together a document that will go into far greater detail than simply one newsletter article can contain.** Still, I thought it would be a good idea to let you know that a tremendous amount of thought and effort is going into how HAB can regather safely. This is an extraordinarily difficult time for the world and for our church, and we want to do things smartly and safely. Hopefully, these plans are an indication of that. Thanks for your understanding as we try and figure it out. In these days, we're all muddling through the best we can, which is part of why I'm grateful to be a part of a church that is a high trust/high grace environment.

Matt

**Thank you to these members of the Regathering Task Force:** Steve Fordham, Hugh Greene, David Key, John Matteson, Jack Mitchell, Elizabeth Spradley, Joe Stepp, Britt, Claire, Tommy, and Matt.



## PASTOR SEARCH

### A Word of Gratitude from the Pastor Search Committee

*By Mary Bridgman*

The Pastor Search Committee wishes to thank the HAB family for its love, prayers, encouragement, and support as we completed the work that led us to our new senior pastor, Dr. William J. (B. J.) Hutto. We will continue to meet for up to two years, as specified in HAB's bylaws, "to assist the pastor in making a successful transition, to help the pastor and his family become settled in the community, to provide institutional background and

to serve as a sounding board for the pastor." We are grateful to God for leading us through the journey, and we look forward to welcoming B.J., Rebekah, Hannah Ruth and Elijah to Jacksonville and into the life of our church.

### Please Express Your Thanks to the Pastor Search Committee:

Lad Daniels (chair)

Mary Bridgman (vice chair)

Debbie Hagan (secretary)

Jordan England

Charlotte Haines

Joyce Hanson

Dawson McQuaig, Jr.

Elizabeth Spradley

Justin Weise



## Needed: Community Garden Leader

We are looking for a new leader for our Community Garden. This person would be responsible for the planning, coordinating, and executing of planting and harvesting different crops, flowers, and herbs. The leader would coordinate and manage these responsibilities: order and distribute new soil to the beds, grow and harvest different produce, water, weed, mulch the walkways, fertilize, and basic upkeep of the space.





## Do Not Be Afraid

*By Britt Hester, Minister of Youth and Christian Education*

I am ready for 2020 to be over. Sometimes it feels good to admit that. Most days I wake up and wonder how long we will endure the trauma and exhaustion of this year. There are days when I'm alone and the weight of all that is happening our country and world hits me. Sometimes I weep. Courtney can attest to the fact that this is rare for me. Usually I am happy, almost to a fault. But 2020 has wrecked my soul in unimaginable ways, as I know it has many of yours too.

And I must be clear that it isn't because the modern conveniences we enjoy have been stifled, such as sitting down and eating at a restaurant or going to the movies. No, it's deeper than that. It's because for the first time in my life I'm truly scared. I'm scared of the unknown. I'm scared of the world my children will inherit. I'm scared that we've forgotten we belong to one another.

Perhaps this speaks to the kind of life I've enjoyed for 33 years. While I have certainly endured my share of obstacles, I've almost always lived with the certainty that everything will be all right. 2020 has taught me that's not always true. Sickness, financial hardship, and yes, even death, are ever present. In a world infected by a pandemic, the comforts of yesterday are never guaranteed (if indeed they ever were).

Yet, amidst the uncertainty, pain, and confusion of 2020, I find hope. Whether it be through the resiliency of our students and their families, the conversations I've shared with many of you, or watching members of our faith community step up to ensure no one is forgotten, I am reminded of God's presence with us, especially during moments like ours.

It is well documented that the phrase, or versions of the phrase, "Do not be afraid," appear in Scripture some 365 times. Perhaps it is coincidence that the number of appearances aligns perfectly with our calendar, but it helps me remember each day to place my faith in the One who says, "I will never leave nor forsake you," (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5). Even in the midst of uncertainty, may we live in faith, hope, and love, knowing that we worship an ever-present God who reigns now and forever. Amen.



## I See and I Welcome

*By Claire Chinn, Minister of Children and Mission*

I see you and welcome you. A very simple phrase but a powerful one right now. Over the span of five weeks our children have been participating in a virtual VBS, or what I like to call a Virtual Bible School. That phrase is one that we have been practicing.

It seems a little out of place to talk about a virtual space during a time of a pandemic where we are isolating, wearing masks, and social distancing. What we have learned during this VBS is that we have the ability to see and welcome people every day. Seeing and welcoming someone is the beginning of compassion, it is the beginning of empathy, and it is the beginning of living more like Jesus.

During our second week of VBS we heard the story of the paralyzed man being lowered through the roof to see Jesus. We learned that during Bible times persons with disabilities were often shunned from their communities, lonely and afraid. I see you and welcome you is a powerful statement for someone who feels isolated and alone.

I see you and I welcome you. Some of our oldest members and some of our immunocompromised members need to hear that right now. They need to hear that even though they are apart from their loved ones, from their church, from their community, they are not alone. No, we do not need to cut open part of a roof to see those loved ones! (Children, hear me say this: DO NOT cut a hole in your parents' roof!) But we can show compassion by sending a card, an e-mail, or making a short phone call.

Our children are learning to show compassion in unique and brave ways during this pandemic; we are learning that when we live like Jesus, we begin to unite our community together. Welcoming those who feel isolated, loving those who feel unloved, and caring for those who feel neglected can heal a broken community.

Compassion during this pandemic allows us to continue to be a grace-filled community that is living out Christ's love in this world. Sometimes—okay a lot of times—I have had to repeat those words, "I see and welcome," to remind myself of the compassion we are called to practice.

I see and I welcome.

# News of the Church Family

## Sympathy to...

...Rick & Nancy Whittle, David Whittle, and Mark & Debbie Whittle & family in the death of Mary Ruth (Murphy) Whittle. Murphy was the mother of Rick, David, and Mark. No service is planned at this time, but there may be a service later.

...Bill McLear in the death of his wife Dottie on Friday, July 10, 2020. A private service was held.

...Carolyn Kates in the death of her brother, R. C. Miller, on Sunday, July 5, 2020. His service was in Jesup, Georgia, on July 7.

## Thank you...

Dear HAB Family,

Thank you for the care and compassion shown for John L. Roton Sr. during his time at HAB. We are grateful for the concern and love shown to our family during his passing.—The family of John L. Roton Sr.



**Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the church facilities are closed until further notice. In the meantime, please join us for the following weekly online events:**

### Sundays

Sunday Bible Study at 9:15 a.m.  
See Zoom link in weekly e-mail

Online worship at 10:30 a.m.  
Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church  
Facebook page or  
YouTube

### Wednesdays

Zoom call at 6:00 p.m.  
See Zoom link in weekly e-mail

The Offering Plate	For the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2019		
	Sept '19 - May '20	Jun '20	Year-to-Date
Offerings and Other Revenue	\$ 909,182	\$ 95,467	\$ 1,004,648
Expenses	(823,303)	(84,404)	(907,706)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	85,879	11,063	96,942
Budgeted Offerings & Other Revenue	929,641	103,294	1,032,934
Above/(Below) Budget	(20,459)	(7,827)	(28,286)
# Days Operating Cash on Hand (period-end)	46.47	49.60	

**DID YOU KNOW? You can give online at [habchurch.com](http://habchurch.com); then choose "Give."**



# Little Friends to Open August 10

By Julie Mason, Little Friends Board Chair

Little Friends at HAB, Inc. will open for students on Monday, August 10! We are excited and happy to have our dear children back, and we are planning for a wonderful year. Our teachers are eager to see their students and can't wait for school to begin. Because of COVID-19, we have limited our class sizes this year. As of this writing (mid-July), our student population at 39 students is almost full, with just three spaces remaining open in our two-year-olds, all other classes being full.

With COVID-19 in our midst, we are preparing to exercise the most stringent precautions we possibly can, with new drop-off and pick-up requirements, taking parents' as well as children's temperatures, the personal escorting of the children individually to their classrooms, constant sanitizing of every aspect of the classrooms and bathrooms, daily (and sometimes hourly) sanitizing of toys and oft-used items, distancing of desks and chairs and using "airplane arms," separation of classes on the playground, and many, MANY other means of reducing exposure. Of course, sick children or children whose family members are sick will not come to school.

Other unhappy limitations until COVID-19 reduces its stranglehold are no library time, no chapel, and no P.E. We hope to be able to have "kinder-garden" again, but are not yet sure about that.

BUT—we are looking on the bright side because we can still practice Christ's love in loving kindness, respect, and forgiveness with each other. **Open House for parents of Little Friends students will be virtual this year, and will be viewable by Monday, August 3, via this link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ltsvXruhuk&feature=youtu.be>

Look for the Little Friends' Annual Report soon!



## Kitchen Korner

By Sharon Maszy (cartoon courtesy of Gene Maszy)



The HAB kitchen ministry is still on an extended (go away, COVID-19!) break. Hopefully, things will improve soon, and we will be able to make plans for Wednesday night fellowship meals, quarterly conference lunches, Sunday morning coffee time, and maybe even a special event like Dinner with a Deacon. In the meantime, we are learning how best to care for our HAB family in terms of cleaning the kitchen and fellowship hall, preparation and serving safeguards, optimum number of guests, etc. in anticipation of the day we can gather again in community.

On Sunday, July 19, we voted to call Dr. B. J. Hutto as our senior pastor. I think we are all excited to live into what God has in store for HAB under B. J.'s leadership. We are so thankful for all the hard work of the Pastor Search Committee.

In the communications from Dr. Hutto, the Pastor Search Committee, and various Zoom meetings, we learned a lot about our new pastor, his wife Rebekah, and his children. One thing stood out to me: Rebekah Hutto has published two children's books! Books and reading are my passion (and my weakness, Gene would say!). We have a two-year-old granddaughter, so I even had a plausible reason to think I needed Rebekah's books. Amazon.com makes it so easy. With a couple of taps the books were on their way. Coco and I shared *Paul and His Friends* a few days later. She loved the illustrations. Each character is a different and distinctive animal. I loved the simple, yet very deep, message. Paul had interesting friends. Together they traveled, preached, ate meals, ministered, suffered, and shared the deepest parts of their lives.

In this time of the COVID-19 quarantine, Paul's experience spoke to me like never before. By coincidence, I have also been reading through First and Second Corinthians. Paul's relationships with his friends and his church congregations exemplified the power of the Holy Spirit when two or three are gathered in his name. Is this another instance of you must lose something to genuinely appreciate it? None of us have ever experienced not being able to worship together as a community, in a building we call a sanctuary. Not even a fire could stop us! Being able to do a virtual service is truly a blessing, but nothing replaces gathering as the welcoming, affirming, living family of God.

Spoiler alert! If you get to read *Paul and His Friends*, skip to the back of the book. It is wonderful how each person is portrayed as a particular animal to fit that person's personality. What a creative way to illustrate the amazing world God created and how we each have a place in his plan and his family.

Of course, I'm cooking for family and friends. This is the recipe I am trying this weekend. I can hardly wait to put it in my mouth! My thanks to Ina Garten.

### Peach and Blueberry Crumble

(4-5 servings)

For the Fruit:

- 2 pounds firm, ripe peaches (6 to 8 peaches)
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour (opt. gluten-free)
- 1 cup fresh blueberries (½ pint)

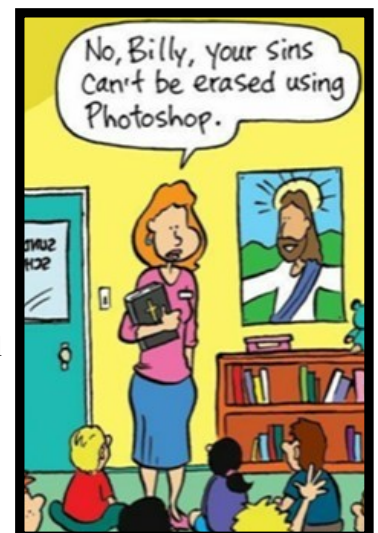
For the Crumble:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup light brown sugar, lightly packed
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ pound cold unsalted butter, diced

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Immerse the peaches in boiling water for 30 seconds to one minute, until their skins peel off easily. Place them immediately in cold water. Peel the peaches, slice them into thick wedges, and place them in a large bowl. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, granulated sugar, and flour. Toss well. Gently mix in the blueberries. Allow the mixture to sit for five minutes. Spoon the mixture into ramekins or custard cups. (I'm going to use one 8" by 8" baking dish.)

For the topping, combine the flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, salt, cinnamon, and the butter in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Mix on low speed until the butter is the size of peas. Rub the mixture with your fingertips until it's in big crumbles; then sprinkle evenly over the fruit. Place the ramekins on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the tops are browned and crisp and the juices are bubbly. Serve warm or at room temperature. (I'm going to top each serving with non-dairy vanilla ice cream.)





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for information about our Sunday  
Bible study classes, upcoming events,  
new books at the library,  
Wednesday night menus, and more.

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