



Welcome Back, Kotter! (and everyone else too!)

By B.J. Hutto, Pastor

Friends,

As I write to you today, I am struck—perhaps for the first time in my life—by just how many things are going on around us right now. All of the standard markers of springtime are here: The Players Championship was last weekend, the men’s and women’s NCAA basketball tournaments have kicked off, Major League Baseball spring training is in full swing, and spring camp has begun

for many college football programs. While, yes, one thing that all of these events have in common is that they’re all sports-related (apologies for that...), another is that they are all things that were upended in the spring of 2020.

While I might have taken them all for granted in years past, after last year I won’t anymore. Indeed, there are a number of areas of life that seem to shine more brightly this year because of the pall of the last 12 months. And one of those, I am glad to say, is church! As the rollout of vaccines has continued—and, in fact, accelerated—over the last two months, it has been a blessing to be able to welcome friends back to worship on Sundays and to see you all reconnect at other activities on campus, such as our Dinners on the Grounds!

In that same vein, I wanted to let everyone know that the church staff remains in conversation with one another, with colleagues in other churches, and with lay leadership here in order to discern how to continue welcoming our HAB family back to church life as quickly, safely, and hospitably as possible. The next few months will be exciting times, but, at the same time, we should all be prepared to show some patience as certain aspects of our life together will need to open up more slowly than others. Please know that we are as anxious as all of you to get our life back to “normal,” but at the same time please be aware that our ability to do so will continue to be influenced by facts on the ground. Again: we are committed to doing this as quickly as we can, but we are also committed to doing this as safely as we can.

Still, while today is not the day when the HAB’s campus and life return to normal, every day that passes brings us closer to that time, and in that light I am very glad to be able to let you all know a few things:

- First, because all office staff members are in the midst of getting our vaccinations, the HAB staff will be moving back into the office suite in the coming weeks. After a year of having to work at least partly from home out of safety concerns, this return to normalcy will be a welcome change!
- Secondly, after Easter, the church office will be open to everyone *by appointment*. As impersonal as this requirement might feel, it will help us to maintain a healthy level of traffic through the office suite at any given

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(B.J., *continued*)

time so that a modicum of distancing can be maintained. Masks will still be needed, but we are excited to see you all and catch up!

- Finally, and again after Easter, the guidelines around worship attendance will begin to be loosened. The first step in that process is that **beginning on Sunday, April 11**, we will return to our normal worship schedule with different liturgies at 8:45 and 11:00. That also means that, effective that same Sunday, April 11, the division of the congregation into 9:00 and 11:00 cohorts will be lifted. Because we are expecting higher-than-average numbers on Easter Sunday, April 4, **please continue to attend your designated service until April 11**. While masks and distancing will still need to be maintained for the time being, this is an exciting return to normalcy in our worship life!

While these might be small steps, they are first steps, and first steps are almost always small. First steps are also often exciting, so I hope that these excite you as much as they do me. Either way, please know that they will be followed by subsequent steps as the spring rolls on. As they are determined, those steps will be communicated to you all in a timely manner, but if you have any questions during this time, please don't hesitate to ask!

Once again, thank you for your endurance, patience, and goodwill during this time. I look forward to seeing you all more and more around campus and, as always, I remain grateful for the opportunity to worship and serve and minister to-and-alongside all of you.

Kindest regards,
B.J.



Coming Out of the Dark

By Britt Hester, Minister of Youth and Christian Education

Growing up, my family owed a Chevrolet Astro Van. Do you remember those? We had one and we drove that thing everywhere. It even had a ladder on the back! Whatever my parents paid for that vehicle, it was worth every penny.

One of my fondest memories in that van was listening to my mom's cassette tapes. One of those tapes was Gloria Estefan's *Greatest Hits*. On that tape was the song "Coming Out of the Dark." Perhaps you recall that particular song was written after Estefan's tour bus was hit by a semi-truck in Pennsylvania. Estefan was critically injured in the crash, and during her recovery—which lasted over a year—she wrote this song to detail her journey. Of the song, Gloria told *Entertainment Weekly*: "We wanted to share that we're a family like everybody else. Things happen, you go through stuff, and you come out stronger."

Like Gloria, I believe you and I are coming out of the dark of this dreaded pandemic. We still have a way to go, but for the first time in a long time, we can "see the light now." As the scales fall from our eyes (see Acts 9:18) and we begin to emerge from the darkness, please know that we are doing everything we can to return us to what is familiar as soon as possible.

For instance, we are having conversations right now about how and when to return to in-person Sunday Bible Study. We are also discussing summer programming options for our youth and children. And we are working hard to determine how quickly we can reintroduce childcare and other resources to ensure our young families can attend worship with peace of mind.

It has been a long, arduous road to get to this point, but we are so close to restoring a natural rhythm on our campus and in our community. As we prepare to enter this next phase of reopening and regathering, please know we are praying for you and doing everything as quickly, efficiently, and safely as possible. We are grateful for your prayers and support as we prepare to step into the light of new hope and possibilities.



A Joyful Heart

By Claire Chinn, Minister of Children and Mission

“A joyful heart is good medicine” (Proverbs 17:22 NASB).

When was the last time you laughed? I’m not talking about the chuckle at a funny meme or silly joke; I’m talking about the big belly laugh that leaves you grasping your sides for breath and wiping away tears. When was the last time you laughed?

I realize that the pandemic, for many of us, has made it hard to truly and fully laugh. Yet, laughing is vital, laughing is spiritual, and laughing is Biblical. As I was preparing to teach the story of Abraham and Sarah to our children, I became stuck on Genesis 17:17: “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed.” Abraham was just told something absolutely

ridiculous from God. Sarah and Abraham were promised to have a child in their old age...but how? So Abraham laughed. Yet Abraham and Sarah remained faithful to God.

As we began our lesson, I asked our kids to pretend to laugh, and quickly that led to full-blown belly laughs. That laughter led our children to enter into our short lesson with smiles and a joyful spirit. As I told the story of Abraham and Sarah, they listened intently and filled in the story with the classic “Father Abraham” song. There was joy in the air that night—there was joy when we talked about being faithful to God; there was joy when we talked about the extraordinary things that God can do for us and through us.

And then we laughed again. I do not recall why we laughed, but we laughed. My spirit was lighter that night. My body was filled with joy.

Yet there are seasons of our lives where laughter is nowhere in sight. Laughter might seem callous or fake. Our God is a big God. I tell our children all the time that God’s love is big and wide. God will laugh with you; God will cry with you. Know that it is okay not to laugh; it is okay not to be okay.



Please make plans to join us for these special worship services:

Palm Sunday, March 28: You are invited to join us in person at 9:00 or 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The service will be streamed at 11:00 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube.

Maundy Thursday, April 1: You are invited to join us in person at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service will also be streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

Good Friday, April 2: You are invited to join us in person at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service will also be streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

Easter Sunday, April 4: You are invited to join us at 9:00 or 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. To allow for social distancing, and because attendance will probably be higher, **please attend your designated service**; both services will be identical. The service will be streamed at 11:00 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube.

Dinner on the Grounds

What: Dinner on the Grounds

When: Wednesday, April 21, at 5:30

Where: Outside between gym & E wing (central breezeway in case of rain)

Who: Children, youth, & adults

Reservations: Please reserve your meal no later than Sunday, April 18, by contacting laraine@habchurch.com or 904-396-7745.

Take-out meals are also available.

Cost: Adults \$8, children \$4, immediate family maximum \$19.

As always on campus, we will be following COVID protocols: Masks must be worn except when eating, and please share a table with those in your immediate social circle.



News of the Church Family



...Lynne, Jennifer, and Robbie Kruse and families in the death of Andrew Kruse, Lynne's brother-in-law. Andrew died on Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

Thank You...

I wish to thank my church family for all your thoughts, prayers, and cards following my broken femur and during my recovery. I am now at home with help from a physical therapist and a certified nursing assistant. I ask for your continued prayers that I stay safe at home. —Donna Furman

Thank you to my HAB church family for all your calls and cards during Jack's illness and death. And I wish to say a special thank you to B.J., our new pastor whom I have not met, but who was such a blessing to me at this time. —Shirley Udell

Thank you for being the light of Christ to my family during the deaths of my brother Terry and my husband Paul. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our church family for your prayers, calls, texts, visits, emails, food, and cards. You have truly been a lifeline of our Lord's peace and strength when Kris, Clay, and I so desperately needed it. Please keep us in your prayers. With much love, Carolyn Hinckley

Sympathy to...

...Cynthia & C.W. Goff and family in the death of Cynthia's sister, Pricilla Ward, on Sunday, February 21, 2021. Priscilla was also the aunt of Christi Matteson.

...the family of Rick Snell: his wife Joyce, son Andrew Snell & grandchildren A.J. & Zoey, Anita & Lad Daniels, and Stephanie Snell & Henry Kahler. Rick died Thursday, March 4, 2021.

The Offering Plate	For fiscal year beginning September 1, 2020		
	Sept '20-Jan '21	Feb 2021	Year to Date
Offerings & Other Revenue	\$502,030	\$66,083	\$568,114
Expenses	(501,195)	(89,898)	(591,093)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	835	(23,815)	(22,980)
Budgeted Offerings & Other Revenue	541,703	108,341	650,044
Above/(Below) Budget	(39,672)	(42,258)	(81,930)
# Days Operating Cash on Hand (period-end)	21.20	14.60	

DID YOU KNOW? You can give online at habchurch.com; then choose "Give."

B.J. to Be Installed as Senior Pastor on May 23

By Julie Mason

Rev. William J. Hutto, Ph.D., will be installed as HAB's senior pastor on Sunday, May 23, which is also Pentecost. B.J., the name by which we all know him, and his lovely family (wife Rev. Rebekah, daughter Hannah Ruth, son Elijah, and pup Archie) came to HAB last August, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, both B.J. and the church felt it was in everyone's best interests to delay the official installation until the spring of this year, when widespread vaccinations, in addition to the usual safety precautions, make it possible to be a little safer in our gatherings.

The Service of Installation will take place at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary in (we hope) a combined service. Final plans for congregational seating are not in place as yet, but it is possible that seating by reservation will be utilized.

There will also be a celebratory luncheon afterward, under a big tent to protect against rain or too much early summer-like sunshine. Reservations will be needed for the luncheon.

Kitchen Korner

By Sharon Maszy

Isaiah 41:10: *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand....Fear not, for I am with you."*

That is the Scripture that opened the video we saw in worship on Sunday, March 15. The video and the worship service commemorated the past year of suffering during the COVID pandemic through the lens of the Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church experiences. Out of curiosity, I reviewed the column I wrote one year ago for the April 2020 *Herald*. I hope no one else has access to that *Herald*. It is amazing, almost embarrassing, how naïve I was about what we were facing as a church and as a world. And now, we turn to the Scripture above, hoping the pandemic is coming under control, praying we can again gather in his name to worship and experience fellowship. We have been reminded in a powerful way that as much as we would like things to be different, we are not in control. As Christians, we trust in God's promise that he is always with us, in celebration, in sadness, in joy, in loss. *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God."*

We are making progress in our efforts to recover from the pandemic restrictions. The HAB family is gathering again to share a meal! We had our third Dinner on the Grounds on March 17. St Patrick's Day was duly celebrated with shepherd's pie and chocolate (green) mint brownies. About 60 brothers and sisters came together to enjoy a meal and fellowship. There is nothing to compare with the spirit of community in a church family. Not to mention the satisfaction of a well-spent afternoon in the church kitchen. Thank you to **Steve and Janis Price**, **Dora Orr**, and **Dawson McQuaig Jr.** for volunteering their time, energy, and talents.

We are planning another Wednesday night meal on April 21 (God willing and the Creek [count] don't rise!) Please make your reservations by April 18 for a nice meal, menu yet to be determined!

Gene is famous for pickles in our family. He makes them regularly. This is his go-to recipe. We enjoy them on sandwiches, in tuna salad, and on an appetizer tray.

Microwave Bread and Butter Pickles

(Makes almost a quart)

1 large cucumber, sliced
 1 cup white sugar
 ½ cup white vinegar
 1 sweet onion, thinly sliced
 1 teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon mustard seeds
 ¼ teaspoon celery seed
 ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric

Mix all the ingredients together in a microwave-safe bowl. A glass bowl is ideal as this recipe will discolor plastic.

Microwave on high for 2-3 minutes; stir. Microwave again for 2-3 minutes; stir. Finish with 1-2 minutes more microwaving; stir again. The cucumbers should be tender and the onions transparent.

Scale into clean jars with tight lids. Chill in the refrigerator.

They will last weeks in the refrigerator, but that's unlikely, unless you double or triple the recipe!



Worship Schedule Changes

Easter Sunday, April 4

9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. services (both identical): Please continue to attend your designated service, since we are expecting higher attendance for Easter. This will allow us to maintain social distancing.

Sunday, April 11

We will return to our pre-pandemic worship schedule, with different liturgies at the 8:45 and 11:00 services. You are invited to attend the service of your choice.

8:45 a.m.: Incorporating piano, guitar, bass, and drums, the 8:45 service provides a casual but reverent setting for worship.

11:00 a.m.: Using old and new hymns of faith, as well as silence, prayers, and responsive readings, the 11:00 worship is accompanied by pipe organ, piano, and choir.

Little Friends Will Offer Summer Enrichment Program

By Julie Mason, Little Friends board chair

Little Friends Daycare and Preschool is excited to offer a summer enrichment program this year, beginning June 7, for five weeks, every day from 9:00-3:00. All children enrolled in Little Friends are eligible. A variety of subjects will be enjoyed, with the wonderful learning going into our beloved kiddos' brains enhanced by joy and fun.

Week One (June 7-11)

“Blast Off”

Space is the subject, and the children will “blast off,” building rockets and learning about planets. It will be “out of this world!”

Week Two (June 14-18)

“Building the Future”

The children will build, construct, and learn safety tips. Values will be incorporated into each lesson as we “Build the Future!”



Week Three (June 21-25)

“Junior Chef”

The kiddos will dig, plant, and discover new taste buds! We will explore food from the community garden and learn how to prepare it.

Week Four (June 28-July 2)

“Americana”

We will sing patriotic songs, hear stories from history, and create masterpieces of art, all related to our amazing country!

Week Five (July 6-9)

“Under the Sea”

We will explore everything water! Sea creatures will be discovered, followed by an end-of-the-summer water day!

The last day of school for the regular school year will be Friday, May 29. Graduation for our VPK darlings will take place on Thursday, May 28. It will be an outdoor event, and only families are permitted to attend. Despite our one-week closing in January due to a COVID scare, Little Friends has had a banner year, and we are all looking forward to next year.



From the Church Mouse

(This is a new column in which we share items of note within our congregation. If you have heard of something you think should be included, please e-mail churchmouse@habchurch.com. This is an opportunity to share “holy gossip.”)

There are wonderful things to report this month happening in our HAB family. The

Church Mouse is so excited to share all the news with you!

I know you remember **Co'Relous Bryant** with his beautiful voice and loving spirit. Our own Co'Relous, now a seminarian at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, has been named the 2021 recipient of the Daniel and Earlene Vestal Scholarship. This is the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's most prestigious scholarship, named in honor of former CBF Executive Coordinator Daniel Vestal and his wife Earlene (who are also our own **Anne England's** parents). It was created in 2011 to further CBF's commitment to theological education and is a foundational element in the CBF's focus on nurturing young Baptists. These scholarship students have demonstrated excellence academically and have displayed a deep commitment to the local church and to CBF. Co'Relous will be recognized at the upcoming 2021 CBF General Assembly, August 25-28. What a blessing this is for Co'Relous, CBF, and our own church.

There are many teachers in the HAB family. Two of them have been selected by their schools for *Jacksonville Magazine's* Top Teacher Profiles: **Stephanie Snell** has taught for over 25 years, the last 15 years at the Greenwood School. She is an expert in teaching students with diverse needs. Currently she is teaching middle school English but has also taught middle school science. She is a mentor for new teachers at Greenwood, always willing to help a colleague in need. She brings a joy to her classroom, focusing on developing relationships with her students to build a strengths-based curriculum. **Emily Farmer** was recognized by Episcopal School of Jacksonville. She teaches AP Government. She spearheaded the school's Civil Discourse training. Emily is honored for her leadership and care of her fellow faculty members, her students, and the school community. She actively participates in organizations and institutions in the broader Jacksonville community to instill in her students the importance of civic engagement. We acknowledge how important teachers are in our life. Our love and thanks go out to them!

More big news from The Episcopal School: Their track team competed in the 4th Annual Oakleaf Middle School

Invitational at Orange Park High School on February 20. **Macaiden Weise** came first in his heat in the boys' 200-meter dash at 28.14 seconds. He came in 9th out of 44 overall in this event! He also came in first in the boys' 4 x 400-meter relay at 4:50.23! And he came in 2nd in the boys' 4 x 100-meter relay. Hooray, Macaiden! His parents, **Justin and Chelsea Weise**, had to be so proud of his victorious accomplishments.

While we are recognizing the HAB athletes, kudos to **Jack Spradley, Chelsea Weise, and Tommy Shapard**. They participated in the 2021 Gate River Run. I would guess there were more HAB runners, too—this is such a big event in the Jacksonville community. Let the Mouse know who is doing big stuff like this!

More happy events that deserve big congratulations from the church family: **Hannah Reese** has been accepted to Brown University! She will be working on her master's degree in public health. Good job, Hannah!

Elijah Hutto, after much wiggling, lost his first tooth! The word is the tooth fairy needs to make note of the Hutto address because the second tooth loss is close behind. The Church Mouse wonders how much a tooth is worth nowadays.

Shali Charles and **Nathan Brand** are engaged! They are looking at January 2022 for the wedding. It will be in India, Shali's home. That will be an invitation to be treasured!

Sarah and Brian Cooke have shared the most exciting news with the Mouse. They are expecting TWINS in mid-August. Check with the Mouse in May for gender update and maybe names? The Cookes are very happy, maybe a little overwhelmed (who wouldn't be!) about this blessed event. We are extending our congratulations to big brother **Logan** and grandmother **Suzanne Jenkins**, too!

That's all for this month! The plan is for this “holy gossip column” to appear in the *Herald* so that we can all know about and celebrate our congregation's good news together! Therefore, if you have something you'd like to celebrate—or if you know of something in someone else's life that needs celebrating—e-mail me at churchmouse@habchurch.com! Surely we've only scratched the surface this month, so let's work together to make sure we gather up all the crumbs moving forward!

Happy Easter to all!
Praise God!
Christ is risen! !
Your HAB Church Mouse





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

IN THIS ISSUE:	Welcome Back, Kotter!	The Offering Plate
	Coming Out of the Dark	B.J. to Be Installed as Pastor
	A Joyful Heart	Kitchen Korner
	Holy Week Schedule	Worship Schedule Changes
	Dinner on the Grounds	Little Friends
	News of the Church Family	From the Church Mouse