

THE leaf

Volume 3 Issue 1
Spring 2020

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LONG'S CHAPEL
REACH • GROW • SERVE



"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do
you not perceive it? I am *making a way*
in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

- Isaiah 43:19

welcome to *the leaf* magazine!

One of the things I love about living in North Carolina is the change in seasons. Yes, February is dark, and August can get hot, but I like the variety of seasons that come with living here and the leaves on the trees that remind us of the cycle of life.

Trees are important in Scripture. Genesis 1 and 2 describe a tree at the center of the garden whose fruit allows knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of that tree, according to Genesis, causes a fall within humanity.

Psalms 1 invites us to consider ourselves as trees that have been planted by streams of water that bear fruit because of the nourishment provided to the roots.

Zacchaeus climbs a tree to get a better look at Jesus.

The same kind of image represents the church in Revelation 22, and there is restoration of humanity, "on each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

The church is meant to be the body of Christ, offering God's love. The leaf of the tree is for the healing of the nations. God is about healing. God's work is about healing. We get the privilege of being a part of God's work.

We live our lives between the two trees - of Genesis and Revelation. We stand between fall and restoration, grace and struggle, and sin and redemption. This edition of The Leaf helps tell that story. I encourage you to find your place in the story and allow these stories to strengthen your walk with God.

Pastor Chris
Chris Westmoreland
Lead Pastor



get connected with us

Subscribe to our email newsletter by visiting our website.

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the early spring 2020 trail guide

The Early Spring edition of our GROW Ministries Trail Guide is available and will help you connect to varied learning opportunities. Be sure to pick up a copy or download a PDF from our website at www.LongsChapel.com/news. Our next series of classes will begin on June 1. Look for our Summer 2020 Trail Guide closer to date!



programming at Long's Chapel

Sunday Worship

Contemporary | 9:00 am | Sanctuary

Modern | 10:10 am | Venue

Traditional | 11:11 am | Sanctuary

LCKids: K-5

Children's Programming - Sundays during every worship experience

We Serve Wednesdays - 6:30-7:30 pm

Revolution Students: 6-12 grade

Sunday School - 9:00 am

Sunday Youth - 3:45-6:30 pm

LIFE Groups - Wednesdays, 6:20-7:30 pm

Adults

There are numerous days, times, and groups to get plugged into to fit your schedule, life, and interests. That includes Sunday school classes. Visit www.LongsChapel.com/Adults to browse classes, or pick up our latest edition of The Trail Guide.

pastors & ministry leaders



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2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." (NRSV)

How simply and beautifully put are these words from 2 Peter. To take them to heart and to pursue them is our call and our privilege as a faith community. It is also very appropriate that as a church, Long's Chapel is following up our Advent declaration of the Kingdom of God and its prominence in our world with a sharpened vision for spiritual growth in 2020. To "grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ" is one of the major activities that we engage in to participate in that Kingdom. In our adult *GROW* program for this spring, we are creating new and exciting opportunities for you, our beloved church family, to join us in growing as children of God.

We have added *GROW* opportunities with two specific goals in mind. Firstly, we want to create a space where individuals can share about their life and experiences in a safe and open environment. We are creating this experience with our theology on tap gatherings so that individuals who are at any point in their walk of faith will be able to have honest conversations about their perspectives on and experiences of

God, life, and a variety of other topics. This group will meet every other week at BeaWaters Brewing Co. in Canton. All we ask is that individuals come with an open heart and a desire to engage in healthy spiritual conversation.

Secondly, we want to invite folks who may be hungry for interesting topical Bible studies to participate in one of our new offerings. One particular study will focus around the books of Luke and Acts as a social and spiritual revolution. By examining how Jesus' ministry sparked a social movement that advocated for the dignity of all human beings, we can gain a perspective which helps us look at how Christianity might also be as profoundly transformative in our own world today.

Look for these opportunities and more in our Trail Guide, and please seek out a way to nurture your own spiritual growth. This is an exciting season at Long's Chapel and we recognize that our spiritual growth as the Body of Christ is paramount in our mission and ministry. Join us as we *GROW* in grace and knowledge together!

*Rev. Tom Owens is now leading adult *GROW* ministries.*

what a year 2020 is going to be!

Written by Judy Dodson

As I sit to write this letter, my daughter is writing college scholarship essays. I don't know where she will end up going to college, but I do know she will be fine wherever that is. With my whole heart, I want her to be somewhere that maximizes her strengths and keeps her on the path of becoming all God wants her to be. I want her to be around others that encourage and support her as she evolves into the young lady, music teacher, and servant of Christ that she wants to be. My heart is full of love and hope for her.

What a year 2020 is going to be!

My heart is also full of love and hope for Long's Chapel this year because I also realize that as much as I love my daughter, God loves our church and me even more. He wants us to stretch, grow, and become all we can be. I'm excited to be part of the evolving that Long's Chapel will be doing this year. We are growing a whole new building, and with that, our hearts and ministry areas also grow.

What a year 2020 is going to be!

Growing is hard work, and our ministry staff, Leadership Team, worship teams, volunteers, and members continue to step up. I have participated in the Leadership Team for the last two years, and I appreciate the encouragement that they have given me as I agreed to be chair of this team for 2020. I appreciate the thoughtfulness that they put into each discussion and decision and thank you for allowing me this opportunity to grow and stretch in this position.

What a year 2020 is going to be!

2020



FAITH AND SERENDIPITY

Written by Susanna Shetley, Journalist

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To the Sutton family, Long's Chapel has been more than a place to attend church on Sunday mornings, it has been a support system and refuge during a time when God was needed more than ever.

Eleven years ago in 2008, David and Donna Sutton were looking for a pre-school for their two grandchildren, Ashton, 3, and Addison, 2. They were seeking an early educational environment that was Bible-based. A friend recommended the Child Enrichment Center at Long's Chapel. The Suttons had driven past Long's Chapel for years with the misconception that it was a church for the wealthy. Once they felt comfortable with the CEC, they decided to try out a worship service.

"The day we visited was Pastor Rob Fuquay's last service," said Donna. "Everyone was so sweet and kind to us. I could feel the Holy Spirit from the minute we walked in."

The Sutton family began attending regularly and formally joined in October 2010, with Pastor Chuck Wilson at the pulpit. This same year would turn out to be one filled with grief. Donna's father passed away from pancreatic cancer and her daughter, Jennifer, would be diagnosed with severe preeclampsia during her pregnancy with Ashton and Addison's little sister.

At only 25 weeks gestation, Jennifer would undergo an emergency c-section which delivered a very premature baby. They named her Aleia Grace. She weighed 15 oz. No one expected her to live but as big brother Ashton said, "God had a different plan."

Aleia Grace was in the NICU for seven months and when the hospital said there was nothing else they could do, the Sutton family took their fragile baby home on life support. They created a pediatric ICU in their home with little faith they could care for this very sick child.

"When we brought Aleia Grace home, God sent angels from Long's Chapel to help us," said Donna. "This church walked the journey with us. From meals and money to cards and many prayers, we couldn't have done it without the love and support of Long's Chapel."

Donna recalls Reverend Alan Mears visiting them at home to hold Aleia Grace and play with the other kids to make them smile during a very troubling time for their young hearts. They weren't sure what was going to happen to their little sister, but when people came by to pray and bring meals, the siblings could feel the love and support.

Aleia Grace's mom, Jennifer, said, "When asked what Long's Chapel means to me, I know the answer. Long's Chapel is my heart. I could not live a day without this place. It brings joy, peace, serenity, great relationships, respite and sanity. I am very humbled by Long's Chapel and so grateful to call it my church home."

Today, Aleia Grace is happy and as healthy as she can be. She gives high fives at communion and talks to everyone at church. She even attends regular Sunday school with the other children. Donna, Jennifer and the rest of the family are very grateful for the new construction. Currently, they have to push Aleia Grace's wheelchair outside to get to her classroom, which sometimes prevents them from attending church if it's raining or too cold. With the new sections of campus, they won't have to do that.

"Pastor Chris drove all the way to Chapel Hill to visit us when Aleia Grace had her hip surgery," said Donna. "Who does that?! We just can't express the gratitude we have toward the amazing pastors at Long's Chapel."

The Sutton family also expressed gratitude toward Shawn Winburn and the youth program for raising money to send Aleia Grace to a special therapy program. The youth sold cookies, served spaghetti dinners, hosted yard sales and more.

"Now that Aleia Grace is stable, we plan to give more of ourselves to this church," said Donna. "We want to spend time reaching out to others and starting small groups. We know how important that is. We know because you all reached out to us and it changed our lives forever."





season of change

Written by Hunter Plemmons

Greetings Long's Chapel. On behalf of the Long's Chapel Leadership Team, I pray that each of you are off to a great start to 2020.

As you no doubt have noticed, Long's Chapel is in the midst of a season of transition. Most notably, our *Imagine... Building Project* is continuing to progress. After years of planning and discernment, we have taken action and we are anxiously awaiting the finalization of our new building so that we can more fully live into God's vision for us: to *REACH* people, *GROW* together, and *SERVE* others as God has called us to do. With the construction comes discomfort: less parking, muddy shoes, fears about paying off the construction loans.

In addition, God has recently called several of our staff members to other opportunities and has called new staff members to our church. It is a time of change and a time of uncertainty. This change also presents an opportunity to more fully rely on our faith in God's plan for us as His church.

In Isaiah 43:19, the prophet says: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." I am not trying to say that our church is in the middle of a wasteland, but I am saying that sometimes in the midst of all of this change, we may feel that we are lost in the wilderness. On behalf of the Leadership Team, I would simply say that we have discerned that God is doing a new thing at Long's Chapel, and it is an exciting time to be a part of this church. Your Leadership Team is more confident than ever that God has great things in store for Long's Chapel.

After all, our God is in control!

prayer rocks

Recognize these rocks? We invited you in May 2019 to paint and write on rocks whatever your heart was led. The rocks included prayer concerns, favorite Scripture, names of those you were praying for, and inspirational words or quotes. The stories from these rocks were phenomenal and touching. We excitedly share with you that on November 21, 2019 the rocks were placed into what are now the footers of our new structure. How incredible is it that these rocks will indefinitely be within the most structural part of our new building?



bulletin connect cards

Did you know our bulletin connect card also serves as an important tool for our members? Many mistakenly think that connect cards are meant for visitors who want to learn more about the church. While that's true, connect cards are also an important resource for our church office to manage, maintain, and audit our church members' information. If you're a member, be sure to fill out your connect card every so often throughout the year – once a month is ideal. Doing this lets us know you're here and allows us to update any important information such as your email, address, phone number, or family information as needed. Filling out your connect card can be as simple as putting your full names and checking "I'm a member!"

Q&A with our construction manager, Chris Fryer!

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Why are you a ministry partner for churches like Long's Chapel and what exactly is your calling in this process?

Thirty years ago, my home church was planning to relocate to new property and build a building. I was working for a large commercial development firm in Atlanta developing property, turning raw land into a building, working with architects and contractors. I took a year off to help my church with their project and quickly found out that churches did not have an experienced advocate with the time to sit on their side of the table to work with government, architects and contractors and other project participants. I felt called to leave my previous company I was working for and start a new company to help churches. Since that time in 1990, we have helped over 300 churches. I don't preach from a pulpit but I do preach in a hard hat on a project. My calling and message is to come alongside a church and become a ministry partner to complement and complete their vision on a project. I am a Kingdom worker on behalf of the church to help them be good stewards of their time, resources and talent while we work the project. Working on churches as a ministry partner with the church allows the church to focus on their ministry instead of trying to 'learn' about design and construction as well as taking valuable time away from ministry duties and activities.

What have you learned about Long's Chapel since you starting working with us in 2018?

Long's Chapel people are a group of God-loving and God-fearing people dedicated to serving and ministering and providing the best they can for the congregation and the people of Western NC. The lay team assigned to work on the project are hard-working ministry partners with Pastor Chris, Torry and the staff to do the most in providing the facilities and resources for the ministry to expand and attract and keep potential members.

What do you think this building expansion has the potential to do for our ministry?

I believe the church facilities have to stay competitive and up-to-date with the local businesses the congregation visits for their goods and services. Having modern, up-to-date and safe facilities allows the congregation and visitors to better understand that the church wants to use the best resources and facilities possible to reach people.

Facilities do not drive the ministry but can add value to the ministry with the best a budget can afford to provide a place of excellence so the worship experience can be meaningful and life-changing. Long's Chapel leadership recognized this by building new and updating the older facilities that allows for future growth and the best facilities possible for years to come.

How do you think things are going?

The project has been slower than expected with the extra wet fall and winter but we are making good progress with a good team and project supervision that pushes the construction subcontractors to work as much as possible around the bad weather. We are soon going to be out of the work affected by weather and the progress will accelerate to a finish date.

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more about Chris and CCL Associates

CCL Associates (CCL) is a commercial real estate development and project management firm providing a broad spectrum of consulting services to healthcare providers, corporate owners, religious organizations, institutional investors, property owners, and major space users nationwide.



Chris Fryer, President/CEO/Founder of CCL Associates, LLC. Chris graduated from East Carolina University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management. Mr. Fryer was in the commercial development division at Carter & Associates and elected to take a one year sabbatical to develop and manage the First Baptist Woodstock project (pro bono). Out of that project, CCL Associates was founded in 1990.

EXPANDING TERRITORY

Written by Rev. Chris Westmoreland, Lead Pastor

Years ago in church life, the biblical "Prayer of Jabez" got lots of attention. If you were around then you might recall the simple prayer goes something like, "And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, 'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain.' So God granted him what he requested."

There is something about this prayer that speaks to the heart of this season of the life of Long's Chapel and our expanded campus. Our territory is being enlarged. We are being given an opportunity to have a different relationship with our community. It's interesting how frequently we can take "space" for granted. In this season where we are all scrambling to find on-campus space to serve the needs of individual meetings, space is at a premium and having the right space impacts our ministry. Providing space for people to visit, meet and connect is an important part of the call of Long's Chapel to be a place where people draw together with each other and connect to God.

Space for people to worship God freely in a style that feels natural for them.

Space for people to engage in holy conversation about serious spiritual matters.

Space for community events that bring people in and together, who may otherwise not feel safe or comfortable in a church building.

Space for children to be cared for and learn that Jesus loves them while they are safe at play.

Space for youth and students in our community to gather, connect, feel encouraged and less isolated in this challenging world in which we live.

Space for community groups such as Scouts, recovery, town meetings, task forces, concerts, humanitarian groups, schools, and the list goes on.

Our territory is expanding to catch up with our mission which is to serve the whole community so that everyone would know that they matter to God. Every church needs a place to base their operation. Sometimes they rent, buy and built. I'm proud that Long's Chapel is expanding our campus right in the neighborhood where we started in the 19th century. The people have changed. The needs have changed. The community has grown. But the mission is the same - *REACH, GROW and SERVE.*

In this season where we are reminded how important space is, remember that it's all about sharing God's love and encouraging God's people. It always has been. And always will be the heartbeat of Long's Chapel. Thanks for all that you do to help us be faithful to the mission.

see the progress from air...



STORY OF TWO BOYS

Written by Tom Fogarty, Stewardship Ministry

Two boys were talking as they sat on the beach looking out at the ocean. As they spotted a beautiful big cruise ship on their left and a tugboat slightly to the right, the blonde boy asked, "Do you want to grow up to be a cruise ship or a tugboat?"

Before we listen to the boy's answer to that question, maybe we should ask ourselves a similar question. Do I believe that a person's life consists of his material possessions? Our culture and world tell us that our possessions (money, car, job, family, house, etc.) define who we are.

Do I look like and feel like a cruise ship? Jesus tells us the truth is in direct conflict to this worldly view. He says in Luke 12:15, "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." The world tells us that money is the key to happiness. Cruise ships are happy places! But God's wisdom in Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, "whoever loves money never has enough money; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income."

Now back to the boys on the beach. The blonde boy's friend easily responded that the glamorous cruise ship was an obvious choice. It was the envy of all the other boats in the harbor. It represented everything, every indulgence you might desire. If it isn't too high on your 'bucket list', it should be. After this quick response, the other boy was more reflective and suggested they look past the outward appearance of the two very dissimilar boats. He suggested they consider their purpose before deciding which he would rather be. The boy thought that the purpose of the tugboat was to help others, assist them in achieving their goals, always to be ready for a needed rescue. He wondered about the real purpose of the two very different boats.

We don't have to worry about our purpose or pursuit of happiness. We know we were created to worship, fellowship, *GROW* as Christ-followers, *SERVE* others, and *REACH* others for Christ in our world. You can sum that up by saying love God, love others, and live sent or just *REACH - GROW - SERVE*. This is the clear biblical message for us in capsule form.

Finally, the boy made the contrary decision and said, "I want to be a tugboat when I grow up." It's not what I have or appear to have that is important," he said. "Life is really about what I am doing with what God has blessed me with." He told his friend that God didn't give him possessions to make his life comfortable, but to be a comfort to others. He tried to remember the verse in 1 Timothy about how closeness to God brings real contentment and that the love of money is the root of evil.

The story concludes with the boy telling the other that everything he will ever have in life is a gift from God that brings with it the responsibility to use it to do good and to advance God's Kingdom on earth. He did remember Jesus' teaching about storing up treasures in heaven. Where your treasure is, your heart will also be. After his friend failed to change the tugboat boy's thinking, they both remembered Paul's teaching in Romans 12 about not conforming to the pattern of this world (We all just love cruise ships, don't we?) but be transformed by using our mind and heart to absorb God's Word!

Yes, God's Word can and will change the way we think.

Reaching outside through EACH

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

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According to Haywood County Schools Foundation Executive Director Jenny Wood, there are 152 identified homeless children in Haywood County as of December 18, 2019. That number is defined by children who are “couch surfing” with no regular living situation, living in a car or campground, or children in transitional programs or shelters. Long's Chapel wanted to make an impact on that startling statistic. EACH (Ending Area Childhood Homelessness) Initiative, a separate 501(c)(3), is a coordinated effort between Christian organizations working together to move homeless single parents and their children to a place of sustainability over a period of 24 months. In July 2017, Long's Chapel committed to a partnership with EACH to sponsor families that were in need.

To kick off the involvement of Long's Chapel, a furnished home was purchased on Ray Street in Waynesville into which the first Long's Chapel EACH family moved in October 2017. Soon after, Long's Chapel leased a home in Hazelwood from the nonprofit Evergreen Foundation and housed a second family in early 2018. Long's Chapel wanted to offer even more support and began to search for additional housing opportunities.

Richard Bates, a local philanthropist in the area, brought about an opportunity for Long's Chapel to own a lot in Jonathon Creek where Long's Chapel is now building a duplex modular home. To support costs of the new land and construction of the duplex, the home on Ray Street will be sold. In 2020, Long's Chapel will own the duplex in Jonathon Creek and the Hazelwood home to continually sponsor and support up to three Long's Chapel EACH families.

As a partner to EACH, Long's Chapel provides the housing, and the social, emotional and faith support for the families with whom they are partnering. Provisional support for a Long's Chapel EACH family is estimated to be around \$12,000 annually. That number supports all their basic living needs, including food, clothing, transportation, bills, education, and childcare. That scale continues to move down as the families move

toward self-sustainability and graduation from the program. The EACH Initiative, Inc. provides a full-time Case Manager that works with the family.

Since the involvement of Long's Chapel began, five families have been supported by our church through the program. Three have graduated to lead successful self-sustaining lives, and currently two are being supported and housed right now. The two Long's Chapel EACH families now are a mother with two children, and a father with two children. Mindy Rathbone, Social Worker for EACH, commented that it is neat to see the relationships that are built between the families, and also the relationships between families and volunteers. One child recently went to Washington, DC on a field trip with his school. "He wouldn't have been able to do that if it weren't for Long's Chapel," said Mindy.

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"Thanks to Long's Chapel, nine children have moved out of homelessness in our community since 2017. Long's Chapel is making a difference. Please always keep our Long's Chapel EACH families in your prayers and continue to support this ministry by volunteering and donating. We cannot express our gratitude to those who have already given in some capacity. You are making a difference in the lives of these families and enhancing the story of their family for generations to come," said Chris Westmoreland.

Volunteers are always welcomed and needed. Volunteer opportunities may include budget coaches, tutors, transportation, childcare (including emergency), mechanics, and handymen. The duplex where Long's Chapel will house two families is under construction and needs volunteers to assist in the completion of this project. "It goes without saying that the only reason this project is affordable for us is due to the volunteer labor that has been graciously given. Bill and Charlene Ashley have voluntarily coordinated this project as an act of love towards God through Long's Chapel," continues Chris. If you would like to get involved in this ministry, contact Mindy Rathbone at Mindy@EACH.com.



While the family's identities must remain anonymous for safety and privacy, the mother wanted to share the following with Long's Chapel:

"I am writing to thank you for being with me and my children always, thanks for your details, thanks for your loved words always for us and thanks to everyone at EACH. You are chosen from the Almighty to do this wonderful work. Thank you for giving us the smile and hope to my children and to me again. I am very moved by the beautiful and unparalleled divine work that EACH does with my family."

called to SERVE

Written by Elizabeth Meschke, Director of Hospitality/First Impressions

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Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

God created each of us with a unique purpose. He equipped us with special personalities and skills so that we might be able to make an impact for His Kingdom.

The skills that God has equipped us with to serve the body of Christ are known as spiritual gifts. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone" 1 Corinthians 12:4–6. Some of our spiritual gifts are obvious, but others can be difficult to identify. You might discover which spiritual gifts you have, including which ones are the strongest, through prayer, surveys, classes, and serving others. You can begin serving before you know your gifts because the experience will give you insight into where you work best, which in turn will help you identify your gifts.

There are many ways to use your spiritual gifts at Long's Chapel. Here are just a few:

Teaching:

- Help teach Sunday school for LCKids or youth.
- Volunteer with our student ministry.
- Help in The Hangout, an after-school program at Long's Chapel.
- Help with Vacation Bible School.

Hospitality:

- Become a greeter, usher, golf cart driver, parking lot attendant, welcome center volunteer, special events volunteer, Acts 2:42 volunteer or cook, or pew steward.
- Welcome those around you on Sunday morning. If you notice an unfamiliar face, say hello!
- Reach out to those in need with a card or meal.

Music:

- Join the choir, Priase Team, or Modern Worship Team.
- If you're technologically gifted, join our SALT team (sound and light).
- Play an instrument for a service.

Spirituality:

- Pray for Long's Chapel leaders.
- Volunteer to host an adult bible study class.

In this next year, I invite you to pray about how God will use your gifts for His glory. If you would like to get plugged into serving at Long's Chapel, please email Elizabeth Meschke at serve@LongsChapel.com.





ministry spotlight
first fruits ministry -
same mission,
different direction

Written by Rev. Tim McConnell, Pastor of Congregational Care

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Over the past six years our First Fruits Ministry has provided tens of thousands of snacks to hundreds of students at Pisgah and Tuscola High Schools. It has blessed students, as well as our many volunteers who have spent countless hours in all kinds of weather to give love to the young people of our county. As we begin a new year, God has impressed upon our team to re-direct our mission from weekly snacks to daily lunches. Our county school lunch officials have informed us of the need for funding to students who do not have the financial means to get second helpings of lunch items, or maybe their food account has been used up. This includes all students, full pay, reduced, and free. At both high schools there is an average of 38% to 40% of students who receive reduced or free lunches. Even with this, many students' accounts are used up due to extra servings made available to them. Many are still hungry after their meal and would benefit from additional food. The lunchroom workers are paying out of their pockets for our students to have full stomachs.

We hope that those of our church family who presently contribute, as well as additional donors, will continue to support this very important ministry. All financial donations will be collected by the church and sent directly to The Haywood County Schools Foundation who will administer and disperse the funds as needed to each school upon request. These additional funds will pay for entrees, and not for snacks and soft drinks. The funds will be earmarked specifically for this need by each cafeteria. Long's Chapel will work with the School Foundation to account for all funding that is spent.

Please consider directing your prayers and financial support toward this important ministry.

LCKIDS IN 2020 IS EPIC

Written by Sally Hundley, Director of Children's Ministries

At its heart, children's ministry is about three things: Expanding the Kingdom, Transforming Hearts, and Shaping the Culture. At LCKids, we capture that in our mission to love (*REACH*), minister to (*GROW*), and equip (*SERVE*) children and their families to develop personal friendships with Jesus and to *REACH*, *GROW*, and *SERVE* others as His disciples.

Kingdom expansion comes when kids fully accept that Jesus loves them without any conditions. In our world, kids are bombarded with stressors that color their days. Anxiety levels are increasing in children and preteens every year. The love of Jesus is the only way to overcome the pressures of this world. Children long for the peace that passes understanding so that their hearts and minds will be secure as promised in Philippians 4:7.

EPIC Sundays are just the place for kids to learn that God's love is unchanging and unending. Through the EPIC Stories of the Bible, kids Dig In to the ways we love a God bigger than Goliath. Kids deepen their faith in a God stronger than any city walls. Serving God is an adventure of EPIC proportions. **EPIC Sundays** are offered during all Sunday services.



Heart transformation comes when we learn that Jesus loves us so much that He died for us. The radical nature of that one sentence takes us a lifetime to begin to comprehend. As kids establish patterns of discipleship, their understanding of who Jesus is and how Jesus loves deepens. On Wednesday nights, 6:30-7:30 pm, kids will jump in to **We Serve Wednesdays** or "**Cross Training**" with Beru. Beru is a Golden Pyrenees learning to become a therapy dog for kids. Our LCKids will help to train her so that she can help others. In the same way, we begin to learn that training to serve a God who loves us means listening to the voice of our master, devoting our lives to the one who loves us, and growing every day in God's love. **Cross Training** will be the space where kids develop methods to worship the God of the universe and share God's love with others in creative ways.



When kids focus on the love that Jesus gives, they become culture shapers. Compare the day of a kid to the day of an adult. Kids spend their days in groups. They have classrooms, sports teams, dance classes, and Scout troops where they spend time regularly with others. Their realm of influence surpasses even the most active of us adults. Multiply that by the years they have ahead. The opportunities that kids have to fish for people have no limits.

At LCKids, we know that the window between four and fourteen years old is the sweet spot for kids to know Jesus. In **EPIC Sundays** and **We Serve Wednesdays** we are dedicated to loving kids and watching how the Holy Spirit begins the process of transformation.

In addition to our place for all kids, we have a place for you in LCKids. We believe that teaching kids is not about how much you know. It is about how much you will grow. If you are interested in Kingdom Building, Heart Transformation, and Culture Shaping, join us.

REVOLUTION STUDENTS 2019 ROUND UP

Written by Shawn Winburn, Director of Student Ministries

What an awesome privilege I have to work with teenagers. I understand why God chose to use youth many times throughout Scripture to demonstrate God's power, character, and purpose. God raised up a young boy named Samuel who grew into a mighty prophet who interceded between God and the people. The story of a young Esther reveals courage and faith in God during potential tragedy for her own life and the lives of others. Teenage Joseph might best be remembered for his cool, multi-colored threads; however, it was his enduring faith in God that saw him through the separation from family, slavery, imprisonment, and more. It was a young King Josiah who ensured that worship of God would be restored after generations of former kings led them away. And there are several more youth in Scripture that have allowed God to work mightily in their lives. They stand as solid testimonies to our current teens (and adults) that God is in the business of changing all lives for God's glory and pleasure!

Speaking of God using teenagers and adults, I wanted to share with you the God story in which all of Long's Chapel has participated recently. Many of you donated cold weather gear for our student ministry to take to Western Carolina Rescue Mission. Your generosity yielded over 300 items that were donated! Furthermore, 36 youth and adults served nearly 100 cups of hot cocoa, passed out candy canes, and served dinner at the rescue mission. Our team met "Shorty", one of the folks at the shelter who had been addicted to drugs and in and out of the shelter. His testimony of how God delivered him was powerful for several of our youth. Shorty now works at the shelter and is yielding a successful and fulfilled life.

Thank you, Long's Chapel, for being a place that welcomes and reminds teenagers and children that they are people of worth and have tons of potential. Please continue to lift up our students in prayer.

Revolution Student Ministries has had one amazing and busy year!
Here are just a few of the things we did in 2019:

- We had fun dancing the night away at our Valentine's Dinner and Dance.
- We raised money and awareness for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Haywood County as we Bowled for Kid's Sake.
- During our spring retreat to Look Up Lodge we asked, "Are You In God's Hands?" despite Mayhem being everywhere in our lives.
- We made a difference in Jonesville, VA and Burgaw, NC on mission trips.
- We hiked with God on the Appalachian Trail.
- We fasted for 30 hours and learned about the daily life of kids in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- We made new friends at Sevierville First UMC on our fall retreat.
- We grew relationships with one another in our Wednesday night LIFE Groups.
- Other fun events included being chased by mad leprechauns on St. Patrick's Day as we played Capture the Flag, tubing down cold rivers, swimming in warm pools, roller skating, and much more.
- We served meals at The Open Door every second Sunday of the month.
- We collected items for Operation Christmas Child throughout the year and helped with the annual Packing Party.
- And most importantly, we grew in our knowledge of the Bible at Sunday school, and so much more!

Don't miss out on the things happening during 2020! Every sixth through twelfth grade teenager and their friends are always welcome to come and grow, laugh, sing, eat, and fellowship with us!



REMODEL OR START COMPLETELY OVER?

Written by Rev. Tim McConnell, Pastor of Congregational Care

As each of you are fully aware, we are surrounded by construction here at the church. We have witnessed over the past months the office building demolished, sidewalks and concrete steps dug up, mature trees pulled out of the ground, and parking areas moved. Enormous amounts of soil have been moved, concrete poured, and gravel spread. A new building is now taking shape. We have started over completely.

However, that's not all of our construction story. If we take a look inside of the present building, we see signs of remodeling. Walls removed and new ones built, bathrooms moved, doors and entrances are changed to fit into the design of the new building, and stairways no longer exist in their original spaces. We have begun to remodel the old so that it can be used efficiently with the new.



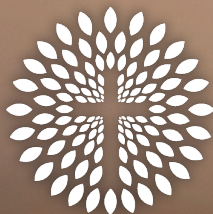
I remember when we lived on the farm in Fines Creek. We kept a few cattle and horses, which meant that fences were necessary. Some of these fences were decades old when we moved there, so they had become quite ineffective for keeping livestock in a pasture. From time to time, I would find myself making decisions about certain sections of the fence. Should I repair or rebuild completely? Sometimes it was easier and more efficient to repair the part of the fence in worst shape; at other times, it was better to tear the fence down and completely replace wire and posts.

Over the past few weeks, we have been deeply engaged in a sermon series around how we can be remodeled and reconstructed under the eye of the Holy Spirit. When we see our need to be changed from who we are and have been, into who God wants us to be, forgiveness is available, and a new life can begin. We may start to see that there are habits, behaviors, attitudes, and thoughts which need to be completely thrown out. We realize they have no place in our new life with Jesus. A fresh start is necessary. This is a gradual process of giving those things to God for elimination and replacing them with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

We also find that there are gifts that God has given us, which maybe we have been using for the wrong purposes. Those need to be remodeled by God's cleansing and transforming power. Our abilities, our talents, our personalities, and our intellect will need a make-over, a divine remodeling. God can take what He has given us and make it all good and usable for His work and our full redemption. Our plans and purpose in life take a new direction.

So, just as our church made a decision months ago to begin a building project by placing the work into the hands of a contractor, we must see the need to give our lives to the Divine Contractor. By taking our hands off our lives in surrender, we allow God to shape us into who He wants us to be.

Paul writes, "So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) So, as we prepare to begin new church life in a new building and remodeled older buildings, let's make sure that we have begun to allow renovation in our faith walk with Jesus. Our part is a re-focus on personal prayer, Bible study, quiet time with God, worship, and sharing our love and compassion with others. Those are the tools given to us as we allow God to make the changes in our lives.



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