

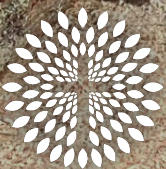
THE leaf

Volume 3 Issue 2
Fall 2020

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LONG'S CHAPEL
REACH • GROW • SERVE



"Do not be conformed to the world, but be
transformed by the renewing of your mind."

- Romans 12:2

welcome to *the leaf* magazine!

Friends,

What a gift it is to welcome you to another edition of The Leaf. When we read the Scriptures, we believe that stories can change lives. The stories included here have the same Spirit and the same possibilities. Allow these stories to lift your spirit and to remind you that God is good. There are people out there who believe doing God's work and reflecting God's glory is the most important work there is.

I want to thank Shelby and the team for pulling this labor of love together. I want to thank you for taking the time to read. I want to thank God for continuing to make all things possible through Him.

If you don't want to be inspired, stop reading now. If you want to catch a glimpse of abundant and eternal life, keep reading at your own risk. Know that the God that inspires these stories is always looking for willing partners to do more kingdom-building work that changes lives; not least important is your own. Enjoy!

Chris Westmoreland

Pastor Chris
Chris Westmoreland
Lead Pastor



join us for worship

Sunday Worship

9:00 am | Contemporary | Live Streamed

10:00 am | Tent Church | Long's Chapel Campus

10:10 am | Modern | Live Streamed

11:11 am | Traditional | Live Streamed

*Find out ways to connect with our live stream
at www.LongsChapel.com/OnlineWorship*

**As we enter into the cooler months and our new building,
be sure to check our website for worship schedule changes!**

WILL YOU BE RENEWED?

Starts October 25

Sermon Series

2

1. Be Renewed and take **HEART**
2. Be Renewed in your **THINKING**
3. Be Renewed with a **STEADFAST SPIRIT**
4. Be Renewed in your **STRENGTH** powered by **HOPE**
5. Be Renewed in God's **PROMISES**

Living graciously and generously in God's grace is proportionate to the health of an individual's relationship with God. We are still living in the turmoil of our world being turned upside down due to this COVID-19 crisis. Be Renewed is meant to be a catalyst to help us move forward by connecting to our purpose and the mission of Long's Chapel, sharing God's love in this community for such a time as this.

Each of these sermons is a building block in helping us heal and step into the John 10:10 life that Christ wants us to live. Not as those who would be reticent in life, but people who are renewed and "take HEART"...who are renewed in "our THINKING"...who are renewed with "a STEADFAST SPIRIT"...and who are renewed "in our STRENGTH Powered by HOPE". As we lock these things in place, we will be ready to respond in how God wants us to *REACH*, *GROW*, and *SERVE*.



*"...but those who hope in the Lord will RENEW their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31*

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as iron sharpens iron...

Written by Rev. Tom Owens, Executive Pastor for Ministries

"Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another."
(Proverbs 27:17 NRSV)

This little bit of wisdom is beautiful and invites us as a spiritual community to prioritize gathering together to share ideas and grow in faith.

Have you ever sharpened an iron knife? This was a daily chore for me when I worked in the foodservice industry. Before I prepped any food, I would make sure that all of my knives were ready. A sharpened knife was an effective tool for every task that I had in front of me. If my tools were dull, it made my energy and efforts ineffective.

I learned something important about touching iron to iron to sharpen it. When one is sharpening a knife, they have to get really good at pressing the blade to the sharpener at precisely the right angle. It would be counterproductive to hold the knife and bluntly hit it against its sharpener. Friction is needed for the knife to sharpen and progress. Our wits are very similar.

The Psalmist is encouraging the reader to be intentional about building close intellectual and spiritual relationships with others. Our ideas and experiences must have the opportunity to press against others to develop better and understand our perspective of the world. It is crucial that as we open ourselves up, we do so in a spirit of openness and vulnerability. Doing this is not easy to do with strangers,

and so there is wisdom in building close and loving spiritual relationships with others.

It is counterproductive to engage unhealthily with others when we disagree with their ideas. This is much of what we see globally and on social media in endless comment sections dedicated to refuting and insulting one's point of view. This is very much equivalent to banging a good knife against a sharpening agent and undermining the intent of their relationship to one another.

The idea behind life groups is that a limited number of people gather regularly to engage in questions, truth-telling, and relationship building. In these environments, we learn to push our wits against others' perspectives, which sharpens our outlook, builds relationships, and strengthens our journey with God.

Here at Long's Chapel, we have everything you need to become engaged in such a group. We have many offerings in the "Adult GROW" section of the website, and more intentional life groups will be added in the coming months. Currently, many groups are meeting off-site or online, but groups of 25 or less are welcome to utilize the Long's Chapel campus to gather in a safe and socially distanced manner.

Perhaps now is the perfect time to join a group. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Tom at Tom.Owens@LongsChapel.com or check out our offerings online.

expectations and reality

Written by Judy Dodson, Leadership Team Chair

Who knew? Who knew that when we were starting the year, we would be part of a world where the words pandemic, COVID-19, crisis, mortality rates, intensive care, face masks, and social distancing would roll off our tongues in everyday conversations? What a year this has been. When I began as Leadership Team Chair in January, I did not imagine using such words daily.

I still expected and knew God and Long's Chapel would perform big things this year, though. When I started mapping what I had *expected* versus what I have *witnessed* this year, it was quite powerful. Such as, I *expected* Long's Chapel to proceed with an incredible building project but *witnessed* the building becoming real as it began to take shape. The energy flowing in that space is magnanimous as you envision the lives that will be changed! I *expected* our ministry team, staff, and members to work hard to *REACH*, *GROW*, and *SERVE* and *witnessed* adaptation and creativity flourish from the church's life to continue that mission regardless of a pandemic. Live streams have been attended in record numbers. Our church has adapted to an in-person car/tent church for worship and community. *GROW* group leaders have evolved into digital and ZOOM meetings. Our children's and youth ministries have engaged with families more creatively. The EACH house is continuing to be built. The Open Door is serving meals despite community and pandemic crisis challenges. I've *witnessed* the Child Enrichment Center rise to *SERVE* families of essential workers when other centers closed. I know this doesn't even capture all that is going on, but wow! What a year. I could go on and on.

I also *expected* our leadership team to be challenged with how to support current ministries of Long's Chapel during a pandemic but *witnessed* these amazing servant leaders planning, evolving, and envisioning the future for Long's Chapel. These individuals take their roles seriously and are so passionate about the life, individuals, and ministries at Long's Chapel. They have had many lengthy planning discussions and cautiously made decisions (both difficult and easy ones).

I started the year with a personal goal of being open to stretching and growing, and it certainly has been a year for that. I'm honored to be part of a church that amidst a worldwide pandemic, is stretching, growing, and figuring out how to continue to be the church God wants us to be, both outside the church and hopefully back inside soon.

With love in Christ.

THE UNEXPECTED JOURNEY BACK TO FAITH

Written by Susanna Shetley, Journalist

Aaron Stone is a resident of Haywood County and a single dad to two young boys. His parents are long-time members of Long's Chapel. When they invited him to attend worship, Aaron initially rejected the idea. He thought Long's Chapel could never understand him, but after an impactful first visit and genuine kindness offered by Long's Chapel members, he had a change of heart. Recently we sat down with Aaron to talk about his faith journey.

Long's Chapel: Would you tell us a little about yourself?

Aaron: I have six-year-old twin boys, Aiden and Noah. I grew up in Georgia but have been in Haywood County for over 20 years. I work in IT. I don't have much time for hobbies, but I love spending time with the boys and having fun. We like getting out in nature to fish and other stuff like that.

Long's Chapel: Tell us about your spiritual/faith background.

Aaron: I grew up in a very Christian home. My parents have a deep, wonderful faith and relationship with God. In that way, I always had a very solid foundation. I grew up in a very conservative church. This was during the 1980s when you saw a lot of conservative views coming through the church. Thankfully, though, I was very much grounded at home. Nevertheless, even as a young teenager, I saw a lot of things that

didn't seem right, that didn't parallel with what Jesus said or did. During my late teens, I let go of all of it and became a pretty strict atheist. From my late teens to early 20s, I led a very solitary path.

Long's Chapel: What changed? How did you find your way back to God?

Aaron: I guess God knew I needed to wipe the slate clean and circle back around to faith in my own way, without the baggage. In my early 20s, I came back to Christ late one night when I was by myself. It'd been a long personal process with a lot of dialogue between God and me. During those times, some key people in my life were very godly but didn't push anything. These individuals were always available to talk and discuss my beliefs.

Long's Chapel: How long ago did that transformation happen?

Aaron: It's been about 20 years since I came back to Christ. Through those years, there were numerous ups and downs. I tried out different churches but never felt drawn to a particular place. My faith remained solitary. I never found anything that felt like it fit, but I knew I needed to get back involved in a church once I had the kids.

Long's Chapel: When did your parents invite you to Long's?

Aaron: It was the beginning of this year that I came with them to Long's Chapel. Much to my surprise, I felt immediately drawn. I've never been big on particular denominations or large churches, but as big of a congregation as Long's Chapel has, it felt like a small family church to me. The first Sunday I visited, I saw Cowboy walk down to the front of the church. I thought, 'You know what? If this place accepts Cowboy with his squirrel and his overalls, they'll accept me for who I am.' It made me realize Long's Chapel is an open place that welcomes everyone.

Long's Chapel: Have there been certain members who have inspired you?

Aaron: When I visited, there was an immediate sense of belonging and acceptance, love, and support, which isn't something you always see in a church. And that's just the truth of the matter. I've been through some challenging things, especially recently, and there were key members of the church who were there for me emotionally and spiritually. I felt an immediate sense of love and support from people that I didn't even know. I wasn't getting support from "friends," but strangers were there for me. I feel there are several people at Long's who live Christ's love. They don't just preach or talk about it. They live it, and that has meant everything to the boys and me.

Long's Chapel: Are you finding that sense of community you've been looking for?

Aaron: I meet with Pastor Chris once a month for lunch and to catch up. We talked this last time, and I told him that my faith and walk with God was a solitary thing outside of church for many years. I realized that the importance of being part of a Christ-centered community is so important with what we are all going through. From Pastor Chris to small groups and many other people, Long's Chapel has been that for me. It gives me a feeling of community. This church allows me to grow in my faith and learn the direction where God is leading my family.

Long's Chapel: What advice would you give someone who is struggling with their faith walk?

Aaron: I feel people need to be open to possibilities. Before visiting, I viewed Long's Chapel in terms of its size and denomination. We all have these preconceived notions about what a church is or who the people are. That can have a negative effect. You have to be open for God to move. I would tell them to trust and continuously pray, and if they don't know what to pray, they can say, 'God, I'm all yours. Let me know.' If you are struggling with faith, don't be afraid to tell God you are angry or you don't know if you believe. The important thing is to keep that dialogue going, and your heart open. It was that constant dialogue and honesty that allowed me to come back to my faith.

Long's Chapel: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Aaron: I've experienced a lot of ups and downs and struggles. There are two foundations I hold onto. The first is loving and protecting my boys. The other is that God will provide, and God will see us through. God is seeing us through right now. God has shown me little miracles throughout some very trying times. That is a blessing, and it has strengthened my faith and alliance with God. When we keep God as the focus, He will see us through. It's a promise.



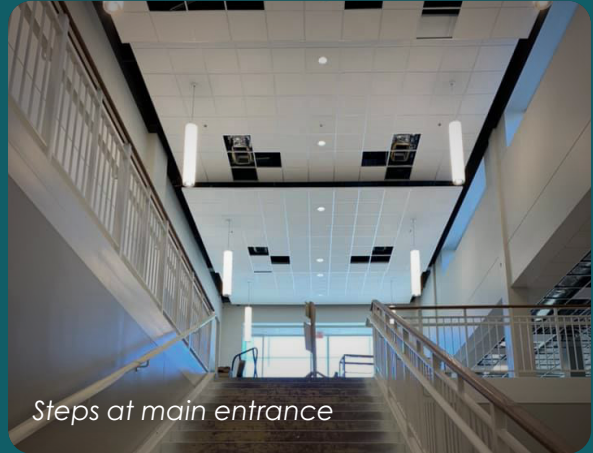
Aaron Stone and sons, Aiden and Noah

Imagine... is coming to life!

LONG'S CHAPEL



Main entrance



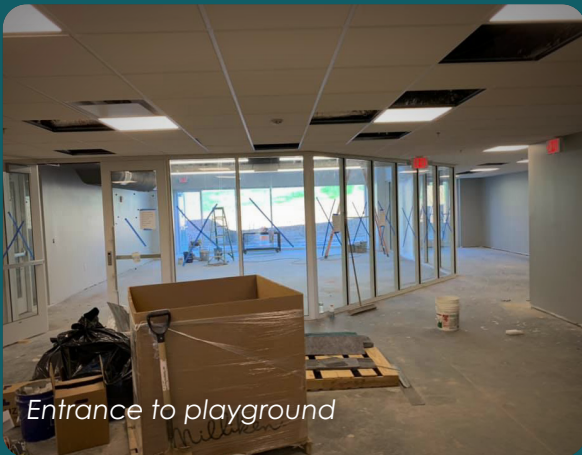
Steps at main entrance



Cafe area



Staff office



Entrance to playground



Stage area

The building expansion at Long's Chapel is expected to be complete November 2020, (pending any delays). We cannot wait to see what God has in store for our church! We hope you will join us to witness God's goodness and continue our mission field to *REACH* others, *GROW* together, and *SERVE* passionately.

making impressions

Written by Laura Greer, Director of Hospitality/First Impressions

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Fall is here and your First Impressions and Hospitality Team is working hard to provide a warm and safe welcome to everyone attending Sunday morning drive-in/tent church. You'll see the smiles in our eyes as we wear masks, and the love in our hearts as we hand you worship guides and breakfast, with gloved hands from a social distance. We understand not everyone is comfortable being approached during this time of pandemic, so if you would prefer not to be approached by one of our amazing volunteers, please feel free to gently let them know.

In accordance with the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and our Conference, we request that everyone attending drive-in/tent church adhere to social distancing guidelines (6 feet from anyone outside your family). We recommend wearing a mask when on campus/during worship, we request wearing a mask when approaching anyone outside of your family, and we require wearing a mask when entering the building.

If you're interested in getting plugged into our hospitality/SERVE ministry, we need you! Currently we need an average of 10-12 volunteers each week to greet, hold signs, hand out worship guides, assist with food distribution, help with coffee ministry, or drive golf carts to transport food and people.

For any questions about volunteering, or to sign up, please call or email Laura Greer at 828.456.3993, Ext. 204, or Laura.Greer@LongsChapel.com.



ministry spotlight 15 years of providing warmth

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

When Richard Reeves retired from the Haywood County School system, his initial plans were to embrace retirement and clear some family land. Little did he know God would lead him to begin a long-standing ministry at Long's Chapel. "I retired in July. In November I began to clear that property. The land had been in my family for over 100 years. That was going to be my project. Then the Lord led me to this project. A family needed some wood. Then two weeks later, another family. Then that first family needed more," says Richard. Fifteen years and 3,751 loads later (as of October 15, 2020), The Firewood Ministry continues to provide warmth to this community thanks to a giving and dedicated man with a heart for Christ.

"I've had a little old lady cry when I brought her wood. I have had a man tell me his family is cold and could not do anything about it. So every time I get discouraged, which doesn't happen often, I love doing this more than fishing and golf, the Lord will give me a story like that, and it keeps me going," explains Richard.

What started as one truckload of wood is now a sizable and spirited ministry. The Firewood Ministry now has seven splitters, a hauling truck, a tractor, and

a dump truck. Donations and volunteers are always needed, as it is a year-round ministry. Donations can be made by mailing checks to Long's Chapel with a memo to "wood ministry." Monetary donations help to purchase logs, gas, oil, and equipment. To volunteer in some capacity, call Richard at 828.734.9272.

If you or someone you know needs firewood, call Richard, Long's Chapel, or Mountain Projects. The ministry asks those who can afford to pay \$40 for a pickup load and \$60 for a dump truck load. "But we will take wood regardless if someone cannot pay. This is a ministry to help others. I've been paid with a chocolate muffin before," grins Richard.



EXPANDING ROOMS & SERVICES

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

Long's Chapel Child Enrichment Center (CEC) began in 1965. In the first year, Long's Chapel enrolled 35 children into the church-operated weekly kindergarten program. In 2020, after the expansion project, the CEC will enroll and serve up to 100 children! "We are so excited about the remodeled and new areas that the CEC will have. We will be going from seven classrooms to nine after completing the *Imagine...* project," says Belinda Marr, Director of the CEC.

Six of the current CEC rooms will be remodeled, including fresh paint, new flooring, new rugs, new window coverings, and new furniture. Three rooms will be brand new. The CEC's new facilities also will include secured entrances and check-in areas, a brand new indoor playground, a new comforting room for breastfeeding mothers, and an amphitheater area. "The indoor playground will give us another option for 'play' when we cannot go outside due to the inclement weather and colder days. I can already hear and imagine all the laughter and fun the playground is going to bring to not only our CEC but also the children's ministry at Long's Chapel," continues Marr. The indoor playground will offer four fun levels, including obstacle courses, ropes, sensory play, spinning equipment, balancing objects, a math beads panel, and a spiral slide. The playground will also feature Long's Chapel colors and have a western North Carolina atmosphere highlighting a creek and rock bed on the floor and pine trees on the walls.

The CEC also recently became a NC PreK Program Center. The NC PreK Program provides high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. The NC PreK Program requirements are based on the National Education Goals Panel's premise that says for children to be academically successful in school, they need to be prepared in all five developmental domains.

For more information about our CEC, email Belinda Marr at Belinda.Marr@LongsChapel.com or call 828.476.4153.



"We love Long's Chapel CEC because of the warm, caring, and compassionate environment that each classroom holds. We are greeted by welcoming, bright, and happy faces from teachers and staff each morning when we arrive which makes our boys feel valued, loved, and cared for. Our boys love their teachers because of the engaging activities and consistency that is provided daily. We can't say enough wonderful things about our experience with Long's Chapel! Wakefield is especially excited for the new playground to be finished with the CEC expansion!"

– Whitney, mom to Wakefield, 4 and Fislar, 1



"The time our son has been at the CEC has been such a blessing. Each day we are greeted with a smile by Belinda and facility members and they all go out of their way to make Jack feel welcome and to make sure he's well taken care of for all of his needs. We couldn't be happier to be a part of the Long's Chapel CEC family!"

– Nicole, mom to Jack, 2



Belinda Marr joined Long's Chapel in January 2020 as the Director of the CEC. Marr retired from the Haywood County School System after 32 years of service. She has her Master's in Elementary Education from Montreat College. She was looking for a way to find her next calling to serve children and this community.

Belinda is married and has two daughters. Her oldest daughter, Mekayla, recently graduated from Tusculum University and is now a Trauma ICU nurse at Mission. Her youngest daughter, Tracy, is seventeen and is a senior at Tuscola High School. Her husband, Steve, is an accountant at Western Carolina University. Some of her favorite things to do are hiking and spending time with their family dogs, Chloe, Izzy, and Daisy.

2020 PLAN B: COVID-19

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Written by Rev. Chris Westmoreland, Lead Pastor

Every generation has its own story of what shook the world. Part of what this season will hold are stories of how a global pandemic changed the course of history. It's been tough on lots of families. It's been scary. Our hearts are with the families that have lost loved ones and been negatively affected by illness, grief, job loss, or countless other challenges.

If you haven't felt the weight of this time, talk to a neighbor. Everyone has a story of how their life changed with COVID-19, and going into the fall and winter without a vaccine, the saga will continue.

It's an awesome responsibility to honor God in all that we do and know that God doesn't call us to live recklessly but fearlessly. Long's Chapel's best asset is our calling from God to care for His people and shepherd people into a relationship with a living God because everybody matters to God. When it is all said and done, our church has credibility because we care for people's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. We have sought to prove that through this season of carefully planned and prayed-over ministry.

So many people have gone out of their way to offer the Gospel in creative ways. Dozens of servants each week have not missed a week providing online worship experiences. Outdoor worship has been a really beautiful spirit. Small groups have zoomed and connected in safe ways with plans to do more this fall. And in it all, you have still lived out the Gospel command to share love generously. A couple of ways that this season is changing us as a church:

The digital church is here to stay. Even after a new normal resumes, we will still want to connect and give hope to people that cannot be here on campus. The digital church is an exceptional resource God has provided to continue our *REACH* outside of church walls. What we are learning will make us a better church and help us use our campus space more fully and creatively to make disciples for Jesus.

Engagement is a choice. It always has been. But the decision is even starker that

each of us is genuinely responsible for our walk with Christ. A church can provide resources, encourage us, and provide us with a community to share in, but the work is ours. Membership is most often a name on a roll. That's not where engagement is. People sharing their faith and pouring out their worship, gifts, heart, and life to Christ is where engagement is. If you aren't connected, you have all the power to change it. Take a step. You won't regret it.

Small Groups are so important. In this season, where small groups are safer than big groups, please connect. There is no reason we can't grow in our faith in this season through a small group. Seriously. My life has been changed through a small group that I have been a part of, and I want you to have the same blessing.

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We have been given ways to become a community church that values the most vulnerable among us. I encourage you, as we move through this season, to have patience and respect. Everyone wants to do what's faithful and best. But not everyone will agree on what that is. What feels cautious for some feels aggressive for others. We are an intergenerational church, and "to whom much is given, much is expected." Let's love our neighbors radically in this season. Sometimes, that might involve a mask, a phone call, an act of service, or special attention to those who feel most isolated.

I have never been more proud of a church community than I have felt getting to be your pastor through discernment, construction, transition, and this pandemic. It has not been easy. But God is tending to and revealing your real heart. And God's got big things in store as we take the flexibility and the learnings from this season and apply them to life. Thank you for the amazing work you do for Christ. I am just one who is blessed by it.



Tent Church at Long's Chapel

A man in an orange shirt and white cap stands on a wooden balcony with a white railing, pointing towards a distant mountain peak. The background shows a town, a river, and mountains under a cloudy sky.

Bill Ashley pointing out "Hemphill Bald" from the beautiful view of the Long's Chapel EACH duplex.

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EACH DUPLEX IS NOW COMPLETE

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

It was just three years ago, in September of 2017, when Long's Chapel was instrumental in helping launch the EACH Initiative (Ending Area Child Homelessness). EACH, 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. Since that time, countless volunteers have given their time, financial support, and prayers to partner and house families with children that are facing homelessness and bring them a brighter future.

Long's Chapel is currently supporting two such families in homes constructed last year. Both moms are doing well and working full time. One mom is taking classes at Haywood Community College. Both have one-year-olds at Long's Chapel Child Enrichment Center, and two of their middle school boys are back in school, loving to be with their friends.

As of October, Long's Chapel has completed a two-story duplex in Jonathan Creek. The duplex will house two Long's Chapel EACH families – one family that Long's Chapel currently supports and another family (soon to be added) will reside there. In total, Long's Chapel will support three EACH families by the end of the year. With the support from Long's Chapel, Grace Episcopal, Hazelwood Presbyterian, and The Orchard Church (formerly Lake Hills Baptist), the EACH Initiative will be changing the lives of five families by 2021.

Bill and Charlene Ashley are dedicated servants who spearheaded the Long's Chapel's EACH duplex by doing a vast majority of the building work, coordinating volunteers, and being leaders within the Long's Chapel EACH team. "We cannot thank you enough for the support and prayers you have given to EACH and the Long's Chapel supported families. It has been a blessing to see the fruits of labor and see this duplex come from the ground up. Charlene and I thank everyone who has volunteered in any capacity to help build the duplex. Long's Chapel is doing God's work within these families by showing them the heart of God and assisting them into better lives. We truly cannot thank you enough," says Bill Ashley.

Volunteers for EACH are always welcomed and needed. Volunteer opportunities may include budget coaches, tutors, transportation, childcare (including emergency), mechanics, and handymen. If you would like to get involved in this ministry, contact Sharon Carlisle at Sharon@eachinitiative.org. To donate to EACH, mail contributions to the church office with a line item to "EACH."



ministry spotlight serving & connecting

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

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When initially learning of the news to move The Open Door Ministries out of the home it's had for over 20 years, one can imagine the heartache felt among leaders and volunteers that felt so strongly about the ministry. "It was a tough few months trying to navigate what The Open Door will look like without an onsite location and what our vision for the future will be. Especially with COVID-19 in the mix," comments Chris Westmoreland, pastor at Long's Chapel. The leadership team's main goal was to continue to feed the hungry yet also be a low barrier entry point to help connect those in need with services available in the community. An opportunity to provide a mobile food truck flourished with a partnership between The Open Door and Salvation Army at St. Johns Catholic Church, located in downtown Waynesville, NC. The Open Door Ministry serves daily warm meals and provides overnight food boxes. "COVID-19 only brought more food insecurity to the community, so feeding hungry people remained a priority," continues Chris.

From the launch to mobile food distribution in June 2020 through August 2020, approximately 364 food boxes were served, 2,248 total household members ate a meal that they otherwise may not have had, 3,023 overnight food boxes were distributed to the unsheltered, and 3,854 hot lunches were given.



The pandemic also brought about an opportunity to provide temporary housing. A 72-year-old veteran, who came to The Open Door daily, was one of the first to receive housing. "I saw him on Main St. one day walking. I pulled over and asked him if he was still homeless. He said yes. We put him in the temporary shelter program, and he is so thankful for what The Open Door and Long's Chapel have provided him. Due to your giving and our intervention, he now has received the medical care he desperately needed from the VA, housing, other support services, and God's love," says Bill Guy, Director at The Open Door. Thirty five people have received temporary housing during the pandemic due to Long's Chapel outreach.

"Day-to-day looks much different for The Open Door, but I'm overjoyed we are still serving, providing spiritual guidance, and helping those in need move forward in their lives," Chris continues.

The Open Door always welcomes volunteers and needs donations. To find a full list of needs, or to give monetary donations, please visit www.LongsChapel.com/TheOpenDoor. Also, shop and donate to Second Blessing Thrift Shop, located on Commerce St., Waynesville. Proceeds help fund The Open Door Ministry.

church family

Written by John Bryan, member of Long's Chapel

"Church Family" is how my wife Jennifer and I have come to feel about Long's Chapel. As seasonal residents, we have attended Long's Chapel for years. No matter how long we are away, we always know we will be welcomed home to Long's Chapel with love and hugs, or at least Pastor Chris' offers of hugs during this pandemic. And we know we will hear the Word of God! As much as we appreciate and are in awe of the beauty of these mountains, we are even more in awe of how God is moving amid His people at Long's Chapel.

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Words Jennifer and I come up with when we talk about Long's Chapel are Gospel, love, warmth, genuine, ministry, faithfulness, and Jesus. The many ministries and outreach to the community are awesome. The Sunday messages are amazing and always seem to bring us closer to God. The music is worshipful. The pastors, the staff, and the people of Long's Chapel are incredible. All of you are family.

This year our worlds have been turned upside down by COVID-19. We were missing church so much! Parking lot church and now church under the "big tent" have brought us a new sense of revival, a new sense that God is still moving in our world. If you haven't been to live church outside on Sunday, give it a try; it will bless your whole week. You can even stay in your car if you like!

Also this year, Jennifer and I have become involved in a Long's Chapel small group led by Pastor Tom. Zoom isn't as wonderful as being there in person, but it is pretty cool technology. We've met new people, explored the Bible in new and different ways, and have just been blown away by the awesomeness of the people in our small group. We thank God for the Zoom group because we've gotten to deeply know and share with people we might otherwise have never met. God used the pandemic to expand our church family! We will keep attending by Zoom even when we go away for the winter.

We give God thanks for our church family at Long's Chapel. When we leave for the winter, we will miss you terribly, and we will look forward to being with you again.

In Christ's love, John and Jennifer Bryan



GIVING BACK TO GOD IS THE HEART OF WORSHIP

Written by Tom Fogarty, Finance Chair

I once had the opportunity to hear Rick Warren, Pastor of Saddleback Church in California, talk about stewardship. He began by referring to I Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." It reminded me of Proverbs 3:9, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all of your crops." He emphasized that the word 'give' is used more than 1500 times in the Bible, more than the words 'faith', 'hope', 'love', or 'pray'. Many were surprised to learn that Jesus taught more about money and possessions than He did about heaven or hell.

Why? Obviously, God doesn't need money. God is not poor. Pastor Warren indicated God wants us to grow in grace and that will only happen if we learn to be generous.

God is a giver – the most generous giver in the universe. Everything we have is a gift from God! In David's prayer in I Chronicles 29:10-13, he reminds us everything in heaven and on earth belongs to God and that all wealth and honor come from Him, the ruler of all things.

A point was made that the receiving of the offering is not the low point of our Sunday service, but rather the "heart of worship." Unfortunately, all too often it is ignored, tolerated or even resented by some. The Bible teaches that God wants our giving to be a deep, meaningful expression of worship on several levels.

First, giving expresses gratitude to God for the **past**. "Thanks" and "giving" go together. When we give back to God, we show appreciation for all the ways we have been blessed. We are saying that we're grateful and that we love Him. II Corinthians 9:11 says, "Our generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

Second, giving expresses our priorities in the **present**. To determine a person's values, look at where money is spent. This reveals what is really important. It's one thing to say we love God, but our giving tests the sincerity of our love. In Matthew 6:21, Jesus says, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." When we make a priority to give generously to God, we demonstrate our love for Jesus!

Third, giving expresses faith in God for the **future**. God sees our giving as a test of our faith. The more we give away, the more dependent on Him we become. In Malachi 3:10, God dares us to trust His promise to take care of us, if we put Him first in our finances. He makes a direct appeal to trust Him. "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouses (places of worship)...test me in this... see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have enough room for it." We seem to be willing to trust God for our eternal salvation, but increasingly do not trust Him to meet our daily needs. No, we seem to prefer to spend what He gives us to satisfy our wants and desires and to hold back a reserve, just in case He tires of providing for us. Maybe we should increase giving on a regular basis for the next year and watch and listen for God's blessings to increase in our life. Learn to trust God and experience His promises in your life!

The bottom line is that money will never provide the peace and security that our hearts long for. Putting our hope and trust in the God who loves us is the best way to store up treasures in heaven. Throughout the Bible, God tells us He loves a generous giver. He wants to say to each of us, "Well done good and faithful servant." During the recent sermon series on Amos, Pastor Chris encouraged us saying, "God is speaking, are we listening?" **Giving Back to God is the Heart of Worship.**



THE SALT DIFFERENCE

Written by Shelby Heath, Director of Communications

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One thing 2020 has undoubtedly brought a focus to is the need for digital connection. While it may not be a comfortable option for many, the pandemic has pushed the digital church forward faster than many churches were prepared. One thing we have figured out is that while connecting online is different from meeting in person, meaningful ministry can and still does take place in the life of Long's Chapel.

One of our volunteer teams at Long's Chapel is making sure we continue to *REACH* all, the SALT team (or sound and light). They are the individuals behind the scenes, often unnoticed. They produce our worship experiences both online and in-person. They give light and ambiance to all three of our in-person worship experiences. They edit the video and create graphics for our digital worshipers. They also are planting the seeds of curiosity in the young that may be watching our live stream and insuring our drive-in worship experience runs smoothly. To say this team of volunteers is crucial would be an understatement. They are making the difference every day to continue the mission of Long's Chapel and *REACH* this community, regardless of age or pandemic.

"I am so very grateful for the SALT team in the life of Long's Chapel. They do things mostly behind the scenes that bless people on the campus and digitally connected to us. From cameras, to microphones, to directing and mixing - these servants make the worship offering to God at Long's Chapel better and more faithful. And they have a good time while doing it. It runs more like a family than a team."

— Rev. Chris Westmoreland, lead pastor at Long's Chapel

SALT volunteers include:

- Camera operator
- Video director
- Projection/Visual Operator
- Audio technician
- Streaming technician
- Streaming audio technician

Every week Long's Chapel digitally reaches an estimated 500-1,300 people thanks to our SALT team.

The SALT team produces the Long's Chapel live streams through Facebook, YouTube, Boxcast App on smart TV's, and our website.

Ways you can help us *REACH* more on Sunday mornings:

- Invite a friend to worship; online or in-person!
- Share our worship streams online.
- Comment/like during worship; the more engagement, the more we *REACH*!
- Host "watch parties" on Facebook

Are you the person in your home that sets up all the home entertainment systems, downloads the latest apps, or tries to fix your friend's computer issues? The SALT team is the team for you! Technical skills are not required, but we do look for volunteers who are willing to learn and believe that technology is fun. We will provide all the training needed! Any commitment is helpful. Join our team to *REACH* more online and *SERVE* this church. If you have any interest in joining the SALT team, contact Joey Webb, our Director of Digital Discipleship at Joey.Webb@LongsChapel.com



Shawn Watts



Steve Crites



Julie Wilson

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUSY HANDS

Written by Sally Hundley, member of Long's Chapel

When we hear the church's big words such as discipleship, theology, evangelism, reverence, and justification, thoughts often go to scholarly learners sitting at tables piled up with books and ledgers. Strained eyes and cramped fingers go along with the fading light of day as the theologian toils into the night.

Contrast that image with the messiness and flurried activity of children's ministry. Kids don't comb through ancient texts or copy passages to memorize. Yet, they wrestle with the greatest thoughts of religious learners just the same. In this new normal, it can be difficult to know exactly how to meet these youngest disciples on the road to understanding Jesus. Because of that, we lose those busy hands and engaged minds by copying the outdated images we have of biblical scholars. I have struggled with the ideas of how to disciple with my children at home. In the paragraphs below, I hope that I can offer a bit of encouragement and guidance to help with planting the seeds of faith deep within your child to take root.

I recommend finding a Bible that fits your child's reading needs. I am a big fan of the New International Reader's Version of the Scripture. Flowery language is gone, and simple sentences make the concepts easier to comprehend. The Action Bible, a graphic novel telling of the Scriptures, was well-loved at our house. Find a Bible version that works for your child now. Then find some stories to learn together about talking donkeys, eating honey from dead lion carcasses, and other ways to hook your child into discovering the Bible. Lifeway Publishing has put together a Bible Skills for Kids booklet that helps families find the most appropriate preschool and elementary school stories that they will love to learn.

I also very much recommend *Foundations for Kids* by Robby and Kandi Gallaty. Together, your family will read the Bible in 260 days a few verses at a time. Foundations

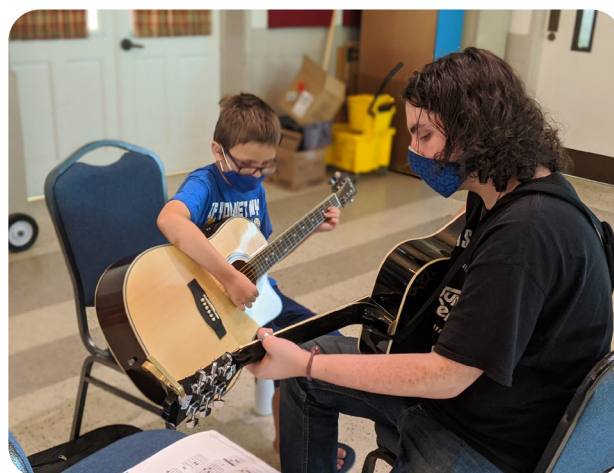
has put this into a format that is accessible and leaves kids wanting to know more. While learning together, teach your child to draw/color/build with modeling clay. Busy hands listen better.

Kid ears also hear better when discipleship is placed into their everyday lives. When working in the flowers together, share about God's beautiful creations; when making supper, talk of how much Jesus loved to gather for food with the disciples, and how the early church made meals together. Talk about the character of Jesus, who compared Himself to bread. Explain how the yeast is so tiny but is the reason the bread rises. Help kids to know that they may be small, but they are already mighty in faith and that Jesus is already working through them. Help your children to understand that Jesus loves them in their everyday moments—their walking-around life. When you see joy in your child, name it as a Fruit of the Spirit bubbling out. When your child is learning a new skill, talk of how that skill could help others, and worship God.

Long's Chapel recently hosted a guitar camp for children. Learning to play guitar was the immediate hook for kids. Quickly, however, their conversations turned from learning the guitar to playing the guitar for other people. They questioned Tanner Clark, their instructor, on how to join the youth band or be part of the Modern Worship praise team. Kids love to serve others.

It is easy to think that discipleship might be on hold because we are not inside the church building. Kids, like those fabled religious scholars, most need the reassurances of God's love and plans for their lives right now when times are tough and confusing. They need to know that Jesus loves them. Kids need to know that Jesus will be with them as school starts differently, and so many things are changing. They need to hear stories of how God has been with His people in times of trouble.

Drive-in/tent church is the perfect place for your kids and your family to be reminded that God remains constant. While our church has had to adapt and change children's ministry this year, God is still good. Your children's hands are Kingdom-building hands. Keep those hands busy, and those sweet hearts reassured.



WILDERNESS TRAIL: REVOLUTION STUDENTS EDITION

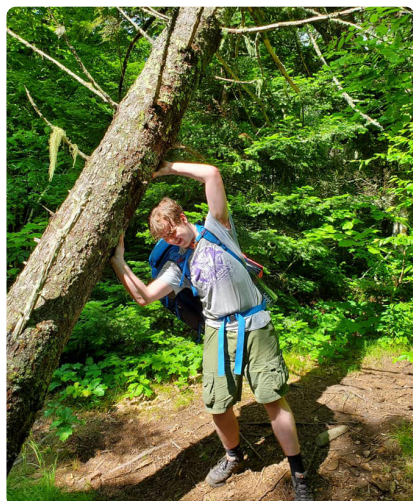
Written by Shawn Winburn, Director of Student Ministries

The summer months usually find Revolution Students heading off on mission trips, backpacking on sections of the Appalachian Trail, and participating in numerous other events and gatherings. Thanks to COVID-19, much in our student ministry world has had to adjust and make changes. We were supposed to partner with Appalachia Service Project for a week-long mission trip serving low-income families in Virginia and also backpack in the Virginia and Tennessee woods with Wilderness Trail. Both remarkable organizations had to close their doors this summer, leaving our student ministry to find new ways to engage our students over the summer. Although we were unable

to organize a mission week in our community, we were able to arrange a backpacking trip in our neck of the woods!



Thanks to the leadership of Jesse Ross (a former youth member turned adult leader), we were able to put together two hiking groups that would traverse along the Art Loeb Trail. One began at Camp Daniel Boone, and the other started at the Davidson River Campground in Brevard. "I saw the sudden vacuum in meaningful ways to bring our once-tight student ministry together and knew the impact on



responsibility, exemplifying leadership, and the power a trip like this could have. Merely speaking, group bonding does not happen through Scripture study alone. I knew this trip would push our kids to physical limits that would harden their resolve to understand their faith. Trips like these are part of the process: a slow process of uncovering one's faith while in action. Doing this trip presented an opportunity to help Wilderness Trail, who does a better job on these points than we alone can and has meant much to our youth for over a decade now." Jesse Ross

The idea was to hike our groups along the 30 miles of trail using many of the concepts found at Wilderness Trail. The outdoor environment provides powerful opportunities

for teens to face new challenges, stretch their comfort zones, work together as a community, learn new skills, and experience God in a fresh new way. Our students and adults hiked over some difficult terrain throughout the day, encountering stunning views, shaded meandering forests, refreshing water sources, and lots of boulders and rocky features.

At night around the campfire, the groups were able to share their "Lil' Foxes" (moments in the day where their joy was stolen, and they struggled) and their "Holy Grounds" (moments when they saw God at work or points of joy). Groups also shared in devotions written by Wilderness Trail staff that deepened their perspective on how God was at work in this experience. "Wilderness Trail is an experience like no other. It is a trip that forces you outside of your comfort zone: hiking with a heavy pack, cooking your dinner on a campfire, and sleeping outdoors. Even though it pushes you to your limits, it brings you closer to God and to the people in your group like no other trip that I have been on. You have to grow closer as a group because you won't be able to do everything by yourself; you need to have others to help you. I would highly recommend it to others because it is such a fun and unique experience, more than any other trip I've done." Jacob Smith

For more information about Revolution Student Ministries, contact Shawn Winburn at Shawn.Winburn@LongsChapel.com.



A PURE HEART? REALLY?

Written by Rev. Tim McConnell, Pastor of Congregational Care

The last few days, I have had the word "pure" stuck in my mind. So, I began to think, "What can be done with this word that we use to describe so many things? And what does 'pure' really mean to the follower of Jesus?" I turned to my phone and asked Siri. She gave several definitions for pure, depending on what the application is intended for. Here are a few definitions for us to consider for now.

"Pure"- not mixed with any other material or substance; without unnecessary elements; free of contamination; wholesome and untainted by immorality; perfectly in tune and with a clear tone.

So, what are some things we describe as "pure?" Pure honey that is not mixed with other flavors from different tree and flower blooms. The honey must be all sourwood, or all clover, or orange blooms in order to be called and sold as "pure." Pure orange juice, pure water, air, and food, and a pure musical tone or note, pure gold. The list can go on. So, how can we be certain that something labelled pure is really pure? We can read the label, but without chemical testing the purity cannot be assured.

Scripture mentions in several places having a “pure” heart! We know that the physical heart in our body is the organ that keeps us alive. It is centrally located to pump life-giving blood to all parts of our body. Without the function of the heart, we would die. It is essential that our heart stays healthy and uncontaminated. So, what does it mean for you and me to have a pure heart?

The scriptural heart is a part of a person's spiritual makeup. It is the place where emotions and desires begin. The heart is what drives our will and our behaviors into action. We know that the heart is the starting place for a relationship with God, for us to desire what God desires. But Jesus says in Mark 7:21-23 that it is the heart where all kinds of sins can live. Even after accepting Jesus as our Savior, the root of various sins, habits, and behaviors must be removed. This action by the Holy Spirit produces a pure heart. Jesus becomes not only our Savior but also our Lord!

According to the Scriptures, the heart can be troubled, wounded, pierced, grieved, even broken. How well we all know that. Thankfully, it can also be cheerful, glad, merry, joyful, rejoicing. The heart can be whole or divided—as in that phrase we often use, “Well, part of me wants to, but the other part of me doesn't.” It can be wise or foolish. It can be steadfast, true, upright, stout, valiant. It can also be frightened, faint, cowardly, melt like wax. The heart can be wandering, forgetful, dull, stubborn, proud, hardened. Wicked and perverse. I think we know that as well.

Much to our surprise, according to Jesus, a heart can also be pure, as in, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8). And even noble, as in His story about the sower: “But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15). The Bible sees the heart as the source of all creativity, courage, and conviction. It is the source of our faith, our hope, and of course, our love. It is the “wellspring of life” within us (Proverbs 4:23), the very essence of our existence, the center of our being, the fount of our life.

“There is no escaping the centrality of the heart. God knows that; it's why he made it the central theme of the Bible, just as he placed the physical heart in the center of the human body. The heart is central; to find our lives, we must make it central again.” (*Waking the Dead*, John Eldridge)

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” - Jesus



LONG'S CHAPEL

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