

Director of Missions and Ministries Report
for the
Quarterly Executive Committee Meeting
July 27, 2020

Ken Blackwood
Director of Missions and Ministries

It is difficult to comprehend how the past several months have changed the way our association's member churches have done ministry. But still, ministry in the Morgan Baptist Association is alive and well! Even though we are making adjustments that were inconceivable just a few months ago, it has been exciting to see the way God's people have continued to worship, encourage, pray, and give generously through their Church Family. I have heard so many stories from pastors and members alike who testify that the Lord has continued to use their church, albeit in new ways.

Like your church, our association has had to make many adjustments to the current situation. We are still adjusting so that we can continue to be good stewards of the opportunities God has given us. **Our association is open Monday thru Thursday from 8:00 am—4:00 pm.** We are avoiding unnecessary meetings and practicing social distancing for those meetings that do occur. Additionally, the ministries of the Caring Place are ongoing with the limited resources we have at the moment. Due to the special risks involved, **we have not yet opened The Sycamore Bargain Center.** Naturally, this medical crisis has affected our associational calendar. We have reluctantly cancelled many regular events, as well as a few special events that we were planning. We do continue to send out a weekly **News and Notes** and maintain our social media information streams.

In spite of the difficulty involved, we are dialoging with our Alabama State Board of Missions concerning the potential for a **future church plant among Hispanics in Morgan County.** We are also prayerfully considering how we might make prudent and safe adjustments to our **Annual Meeting, scheduled for October 27th at New Center Baptist Church.** We are thinking about a shorter, streamlined, single-session annual meeting that will feature only absolutely necessary business while focusing on celebration and worship. **Phil Waldrep is our Preacher this year!**

In the interest of the safety of your church members, Alison and I have not visited different churches in our association every week, as is our custom. We would not want to cross-contaminate congregations by being at a different place each Sunday, should one church discover that they have an active case of COVID-19. We do attend our own home church when I am not preaching somewhere else. We also watch our associational member churches services online.

Like all of our churches, your association is watching the financial situation very carefully. We continue to marvel at the faithfulness of God's people during these trying times. Most of our churches report that they are holding their own financially, and a few even say that their offerings are up! Here at the association, we have seen a decrease in financial support overall, but we are holding our own so far. **We are so grateful for your financial support!** However, we would ask you to pray that the Lord would use His people to continue to provide the resources needed to continue our association's ministry. We applied for and received funding through the **CARES Act**, and those monies have helped make up for shortfalls in receipts from our member churches. **We continue to trust that God will provide the necessary resources for all that the wants done through the Morgan Baptist Association.**

As we approach our Annual Meeting, please be praying for your association. We are praying for you and your church! **Our Nominating Committee may contact you about serving through the association.** I know you will prayerfully consider any opportunity that you might be offered to help build God's Kingdom through the many Partnership Ministries of our association.

Exodus 18:21 (NASB) says, *"Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens."* God knows those men and women who will step up and help lead our association forward through and beyond this current situation. May none of us falter or fail to be faithful during these days of difficulty, but more importantly, these days of unprecedented opportunity to share the Hope of Jesus!

We thank you for your prayers; and please be assured that we are praying for you, your family, and your church. I continue to believe that the Lord has much in store for the Morgan Baptist Association and for your church!

Remember, **partnership begins here.**

Blessings,

Ken

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