

A Publication of the
Baptist General
Convention of
Virginia

Baptist Herald

Greetings To Our BGCVA Family!

In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, we are asking all congregations to adhere to the Corona Virus Guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as guidance from local and state agencies with regard to appropriate precautions.

As you are aware, this situation is still evolving as we speak and as such, individual leaders and congregations will have to prayerfully consider options for their meetings and worship.

Please be aware that congregations with a high percentage of age 60+ members must be especially vigilant in following the CDC guidelines to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable to this virus.

- Please consider that recommended guidelines suggest the elimination of touching hands
- Consider discouraging handshaking and kissing and hugs during fellowship periods
- Use pre-packaged communion kits if possible to eliminate handling the elements

I have attached documents that could be shared with church leaders and congregations.

In the meantime, we trust God and continue to pray for the healing that only God can deliver.


J. Elisha Burke, M.Div., D.Min., Director,
Health & Wellness

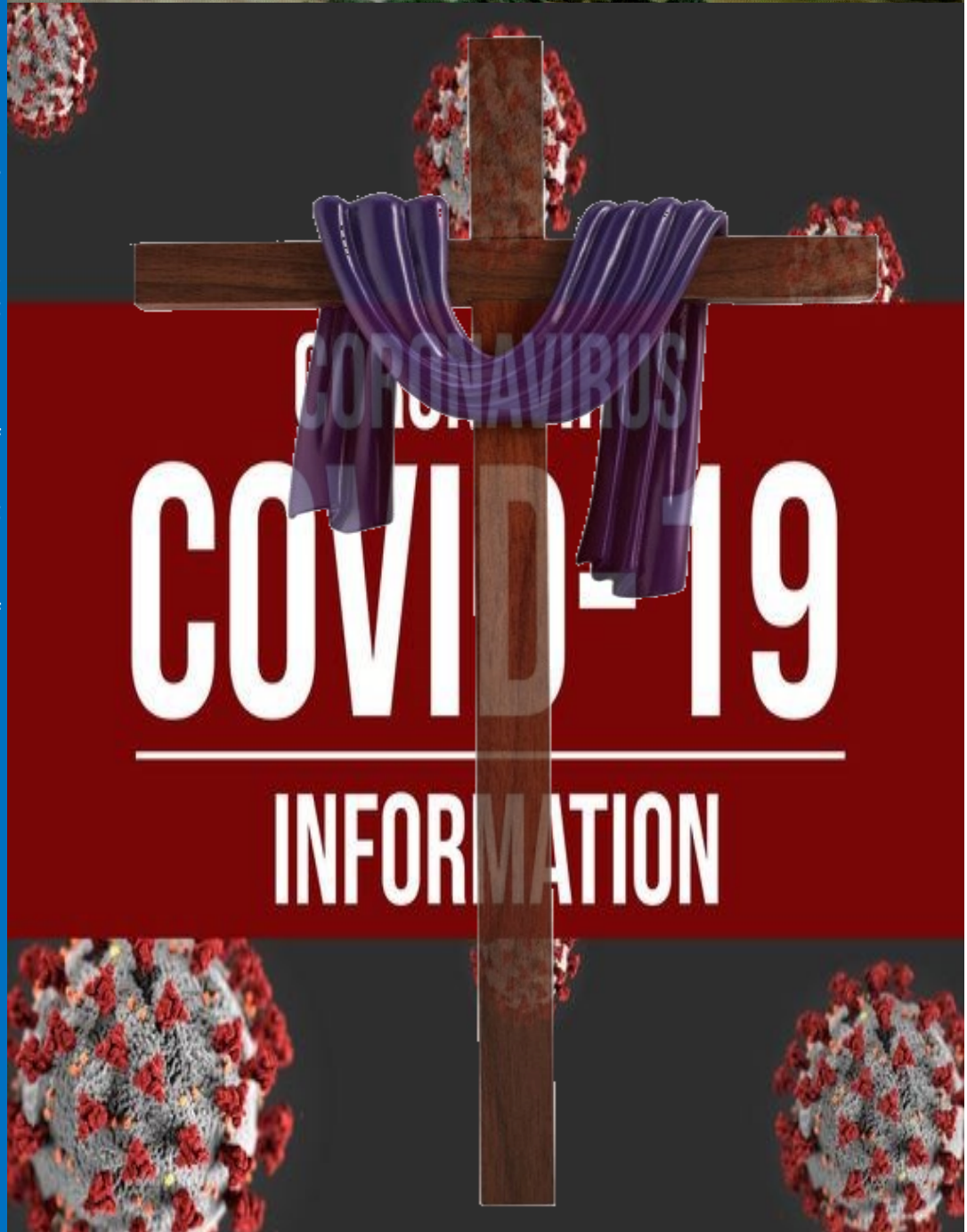

Dr. Gregory M. Howard, President


Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister



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Family Holy Week Readings/ Discussions

Palm Sunday Scripture Reading

Luke 19:28-40 (NIV)

Jesus Enters Jerusalem as King

Read Luke 19:28-40

(If there are children or youth read from a Kids Bible so they can understand the language being used)

Discuss:

Light 5 electric or wax candles and place on table. Cut paper into small palm leaves. Add little ferns or leaves from the yard around the candles. As you read the scripture aloud, walk around and wave of the palm branches like were waved as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey.

Talk about sermon that you watched or heard today.

How did Jesus get to Jerusalem? Talk about donkey being a sign of humility and peace. He was solemnly entering as a humble King of peace. Traditionally, entering the city on a **donkey** symbolizes arrival in peace, rather than as a war-waging king arriving on a horse.

Close with Prayer

(Allow children and youth to pray first followed by parents)



Monday Scripture Reading

John 12:1-8 (NIV or Children's Bible)

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

Read John 12:1-8

¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the

table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint [a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.[b]" ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me."

Ask:

- What do you think about what Mary says about Jesus?
- What do you think about what she did?
- Why did she do it?
- What is the 'all' that you could give?
- What questions do you have about this scripture?

Read and Discuss:

Cleansing of the Temple (Poem by Caroline Beckett):

When the cool pillars no longer seemed to reach Heaven
And the sacred space swarmed with a Babel of trade and depravity
I watched the white fury rise in his face
Like divine lightning.

He was flame: upright, urgent, devouring,
Taut with a purpose his flesh could neither contain nor sustain
Without violence. Suddenly terrifying and tall,
This mild carpenter from Galilee.

I watched him knot the cords, his muscles bunching
Each movement brutally eloquent of the deepest rage.
He trembled and sweat lapped the corner
Of one widening eye.

In the shade behind him, knife whetted, I stood
Spellbound by the majesty of an anger that broke
From the rock of eternity, potent as fire.
I yearned toward him in his indignation.

He struck out with lash and with cry, with a heart too much breaking to be exultant

And while my arm tensed for the fray and my heart whispered messiah I wept for his pain.

Close with Prayer

(Allow children and youth to pray first followed by parents)

Tuesday Scripture Reading

Luke 22:1-6; 47-48 (NIV or Children's Bible)

Judas Betrays Jesus

Ask (Allow children and youth time to respond)

Why do you think Judas went to the chief priests and temple officers?

What do you think about what Judas did?

How do you think Jesus felt?

Is there anything else you want to think or say about this story?

Activity

Judas betrays Jesus:

Take a rubbing of some coins by placing coins underneath paper and rubbing over with wax crayons. Or use money from Monopoly game.

On what do you spend your money?

What can you do with your money to help others?

Pray

As you look at money or pictures of money, ask God to help you think about the question of how we spend our money and how could we use it to help others?

Wednesday Scripture Reading

Luke 22:54 – 62 (NIV or Children's Bible)

Peter Denying Jesus (An Interactive Story)

Children and Youth (Join in by...)

Making faces, doing the actions, or finding emojis on their phones. Or, they can draw the expressions around a paper plate and pointing as you hear them.

Everyone come and gather around the fire – it's a cold evening so we need to keep warm (*show feeling cold and warming ourselves by the fire*). There is a crowd gathering. How does it feel to be in the crowd? Excited, scary, joyful, worried? One person in the crowd was very worried (*show a worried face*). Peter, a close friend of Jesus was reliving the events of the evening when Jesus was arrested. It had made him so angry (*show an angry face*) that Jesus had been betrayed by Judas in that way.

Now he was in shock (*show a shocked face*) that Jesus was being kept by the soldiers and tried before the court. He felt sad (*show a sad face*)

too. Sad that his friend, that wonderful, kind and loving (*show a loving face*) man could be treated in such a cruel and violent way (*show an angry face*).

Peter looked up to see a servant girl, staring at him from across the fire with a puzzled expression on her face (*show a puzzled face*). She pointed over at him and said, 'you were with him weren't you?' Peter replied, 'I don't know him!' (*Say it to your neighbour*). Now he was frightened (*show a frightened face*), but then it got worse still as another person pointed and said, 'you are also one of them'. 'I am Not.' Peter exclaimed. (*Say it to your neighbour*)

Then, later still, someone else pointed him out, 'I'm certain this man was with him.' (*Say it to your neighbour*). Peter turned to him, 'I do not know what you are talking about' (*Say it to your neighbour*).

At that very moment, a rooster crowed and Jesus turned to look Peter straight in the eye. And Peter remembered Jesus words to him, 'before the rooster crows, you will deny knowing me three times.' Peter felt heartbroken, put his head in his hands and ran away crying (*show a sad face*).

Pray

Think about the last day or two. How have you been feeling? Tell God about your feelings, even if you have felt angry, worried or sad. He wants to listen to each one of us. Thank God for loving and forgiving us just as Jesus loved and forgave Peter.

Maundy Thursday Scripture Reading

John 13:1-11 (NIV or Children's Bible)

The love feast or Agape Meal, is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry and expressing the koinonia (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ. It is not the same as Holy Communion and can be shared together in any household.

An Agape Meal

The Love Feast, or Agape Meal, is a Christian fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during

his ministry and expressing the koinonia (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ.

One of the advantages of the Love Feast is that it can be held almost anywhere even in your home. (As a family bring palm branches that you.

CALL TO THE LOVE FEAST (AGAPE MEAL)

Bible Reading John 13:1-11

Read today's scripture while slowly pouring water into a bowl. Ask all persons to listen to the sound of the water pouring. Imagine it being poured on to your tired and dusty feet, soaking all the dirt and aches away. Jesus is like the water, He wants to wash our whole lives clean.

Prayer Child or Youth

Speaker 1 Out of darkness came light

All And the power of God was revealed in the running wave and the flowing air, in the quiet earth and the shining stars.

Speaker 2 Out of the dust came life;

All And the image of God was revealed in the human face and the gentle heart, in the warmth of flesh and the depth of soul

Speaker 3 Out of justice came freedom;

All And the wisdom of God was revealed in the need to grow and the will to love, in the chance to know and the power to choose.

Speaker 4 And God looked at the creation,

All And Behold, it was very good.

Speaker 5 PSALM 34:1 says 'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.'

PRAYER OF ADORATION (Designate Someone)

All: I will keep on thanking God With constant words of prayer. I will glory in the living God: The humble will hear

and be glad.

Speaker 1 Let us pray.

Unison Living God, our loving parent; you cherish your creation and We praise you With earth, air, water, fire: in our element as your children, We praise you.. With our lips, with our lives, in all our diversity, each one made in your image, We praise you. Because, in Jesus, you came to share our human lives, our sorrow and joy, We praise you. Because your Spirit is at work today: encouraging, enabling, surprising us, We praise you. Poor as we are, you give us hope: Salt of the earth, you give us meaning and purpose and We praise you.

All: Amen.



Friday Scripture Reading John 19:16 – 37
(NIV or Children’s Bible)

Meet **Mary the Mother of Jesus** - An Interactive Story by Emma Anderton
(A story for Good Friday to remind us that Jesus’ mother, Mary was with Jesus while he died on the cross. Read the story by all joining in together, reading and repeating or by reading a couple of lines each.

Reader Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby.

Reader Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill.

Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right

from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill and as they put him on the cross as He looked with love at his family and friends.

Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill and as they put him on the cross and as he looked with love at his family and friends and as he cried out to God in fear and pain.

Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill and as they put him on the cross and as he looked with love at his family and friends and as he cried out to God in fear and pain and died.

Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill and as they put him on the cross and as he looked with love at his family and friends and as he cried out to God in fear and pain and as he died and as his body was laid in the tomb.

Jesus’ mother, Mary was there right from the birth of her tiny baby and as he carried the heavy cross up the hill and as they put him on the cross and as he looked with love at his family and friends and as he cried out to God in fear and pain and as he died and as his body was laid in the tomb. And, Jesus’ mother, Mary was there three days later, when he rose from the dead!!

The Visual Display

On Palm Sunday we placed leaves from outside, or made leaves from green paper, on a tray or on the floor where we gathered for worship. Today, add a cross by making one from twigs, using one you have at home, drawing and cutting one out or you could make a cross by laying two scarves on the floor in a cross shape.

Pray

Spend some time reading the story of Jesus death on the cross in whichever way you prefer.

Look at the cross you have placed on the tray or the floor. Think how Jesus showed love for his mother and ‘favorite disciple’ even at the last moments of his life. Imagine how much he loves you too.



Saturday
Scripture Reading John 19:38 – 42 (NIV or Children’s Bible)

Place a pebble on the tray to represent the sealed tomb. Jesus lies in the tomb, behind the large stone rolled across the entrance. Find a pebble and write some words on it to express how you feel about this or decorate it.

You could build a ‘den’ and spend some time quietly thinking about Jesus and praying or reading the Easter story.

The candles remain snuffed out. Add a stone to the display, as you tell how Jesus’ body had been taken down from the cross and placed inside a tomb, and a huge stone had been rolled across the entrance to seal it.

Play hide and seek or hide an object for others to find. Use dark colors to create a mound for a tomb, and a circle to be the stone rolled over the entrance.

Pray

Hold a stone in your hand (if you can’t find a pebble, then find something heavy in your hand. Think about how the disciples must have felt on that Saturday – heavy or light? Ask God to help you when your faith feels weak or your worries too heavy. **PRAY.**

BGCVA Video Links during COVID-19 Pandemic

BGCVA Video Message to Faith Leaders and Friends during this COVID-19 Pandemic.



- ⇒ BGCVA Staff Message—<https://youtu.be/teIHRkT-wUU>
- ⇒ President Howard Message—<https://youtu.be/X5nf3WQasD8>
- ⇒ Executive Minister Whitaker Call To Prayer Message— <https://youtu.be/V1fmUpKmEWY>
- ⇒ Clergy President Reid Message—<https://youtu.be/FF37-00H29M>

Shared Ministries and Partners Links during COVID-19 Pandemic

- ⇒ <https://www.dominionenergy.com/company/coronavirus>
- ⇒ <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/faq/>
- ⇒ <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2020/03/Faith-Leaders-Virtual-Meeting-Resources.pdf>
- ⇒ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2020/march/caring-for-your-churchs-finance-through-cares-act.html?fbclid=IwAR3j8rCfTEkbwyjhirdE81643Llg9vJ54g6VBX6kQodomYTSxyXTFwXxN5I>
- ⇒ <https://faithlife.com/coronavirus>
- ⇒ <https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/whatwedo/vulnerable.htm>
- ⇒ <https://www.smartchurchsolutions.com/blog/the-coronavirus-and-your-church-facility>
- ⇒ https://ibhs.org/wpcontent/uploads/wpmembers/files/Business-Protection_Virus-Preparedness_IBHS.pdf
- ⇒ <https://www.bgcva.org/coronavirus-information.html>



Resources For Faith Leaders in the Wake of COVID-19

Dear Faith Leaders and Friends,

I hope you, your families, and your congregations are doing well in these complex times. Recent CDC guidance about restricting gatherings of 10+ people, in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, has put an enormous strain on all of our rhythms of life.

For pastors and church leaders who regularly lead gatherings of 10+, this news presents challenges to the way many operate and gather together for worship. We wanted to pass along some information below in case some of it is helpful for you.

I. Live Streaming for Services and Meetings

You may already have live-streaming set up. If you don't, you can use services like **Facebook Live**, **YouTube Live**, **Google Meet**, and **Zoom** for free or relatively low cost.

Here is an article that walks through some of these services. **[A Beginner's Guide to Church Live Streaming](#)**

Google is making the professional version of **Google Hangouts Meet** available for **FREE**. Here are **instructions** for setting up Google video streaming.

II. Virtual Giving

We also know live streaming church services without providing ways for people to give online will affect the operations and services of a congregation.

Here's a **good article** on the five best online giving platforms.

PayPal, **Venmo**, or **CashApp** might be easiest

at first.

Tithe.ly, **EasyTithe**, **RebelGive**, **Planning Center**, and **GiveLify** position themselves as longer-term solutions.

III. Caring Communication

We also know as leaders you have to communicate clearly and effectively to allay fears and misinformation. We found these websites, articles, and resources helpful as we seek to understand and adjust to this virus.

<https://coronavirusandthechurch.com> - contains information from the **CDC** and pastors for **best practices** for leading a congregation in the midst of COVID-19.

Washington Post: Why Outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially and how to "flatten the curve" - a helpful article explaining the science behind the need for social distancing.

Praxis Labs: Love in the Time of Coronavirus

Sojourners: American Individualism vs. Loving Your Neighbor

New York Times: The Christian Response to the Coronavirus: Stay Home

Chanequa Walker-Barnes' Youtube Presentation "Pastoring in a Pandemic"

Joshua DuBois - www.valuespartnerships.com

Baptist General Convention of Virginia Health & Wellness and Social Justice

Ministry

March 2020

Dr. J. Elisha Burke, Director

Thank You Our Partners for their links during COVID-19 Pandemic



Checklist for Community and Faith Leaders

Community- and faith-based organizations are encouraged to prepare for the possibility of a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in their communities. Use this checklist to protect the health of those you serve and staff in your care.

Plan and Prepare

- ✓ Update your emergency operations plan with the help of your local public health department, emergency operations coordinator or planning team, and other relevant partners to include COVID-19 planning.
- ✓ Identify space that can be used to separate sick people if needed.
- ✓ Develop an emergency communication plan for distributing timely and accurate information to workers and those you serve.
- ✓ Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services, especially for groups at greater risk such as older adults or people with chronic health conditions.

- ✓ Promote the practice of everyday preventative actions.
- Frequently [wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.
- Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when sick.
- ✓ Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and a couple of disposable facemasks, just in case someone becomes sick during an event).
- ✓ Plan for staff absences by developing flexible attendance and sick-leave policies, plan for alternative coverage, and monitor and track COVID-19 related staff absences.
- ✓ Engage with stigmatized groups and speak out against negative

behaviors to help counter stigma and discrimination.

Take Action

If there is COVID-19 in your community:

- ✓ Stay informed about local COVID-19 information and updates.
- ✓ Put your emergency operations and communication plans into action.
- ✓ Communicate with your community members if events and services are changed, postponed, or cancelled.
- ✓ Emphasize everyday preventive actions through intensified communications with employees and visitors to your organization.
- Stay home when sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.
- Wash hands often.
- Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).
- ✓ During an event, if someone becomes sick separate them into an isolated room and ask them to leave as soon as possible.

[Cdc.gov/covid-19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid-19)

**COVID
19**
CORONAVIRUS
DISEASE

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

***Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure.**

Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.



www.cdc.gov/covid19-symptoms

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

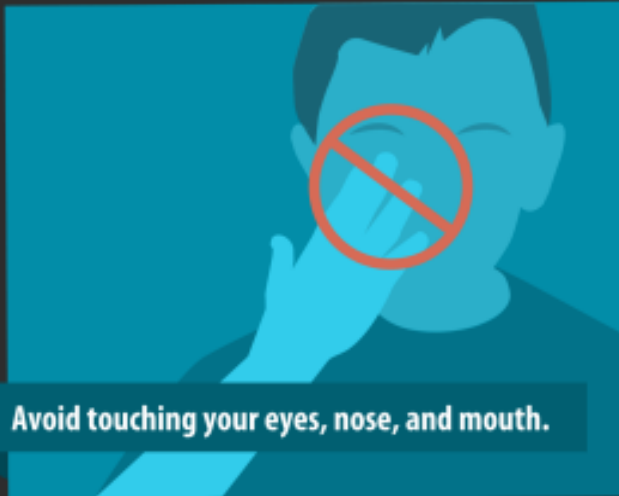
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

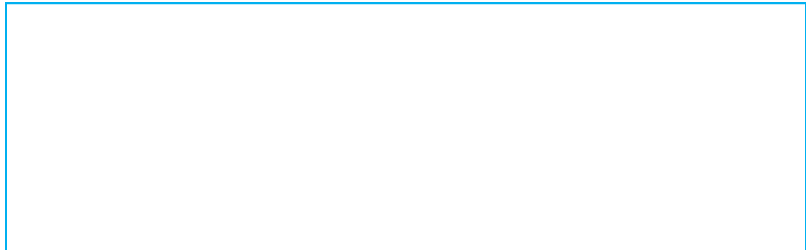


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COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. BE COUNTED.



ABOUT THE CENSUS

- The goal of the 2020 Census is to count everyone in America's diverse and growing population once, only once and in the right place.
- Ensuring a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census is crucial to Virginia's economy. Census data is used to help determine how approximately \$675 billion dollars is distributed from the federal government to state and local governments.
- It is estimated that Virginia will lose up to \$2,000 annually for each person not counted in the 2020 Census. That amounts to upwards of \$20,000 per person over a 10 year period.
- Additionally, census data is used for attracting new businesses to states and local areas, planning for hospitals and other health services, and designing public safety strategies.

VIRGINIA COMPLETE COUNT COMMISSION

On December 18, 2018, Governor Northam signed Executive Order Twenty Seven establishing the Virginia Complete Count Commission to improve the participation and representation of all Virginians in the 2020 Census. The Virginia Complete Count Commission is working to educate and motivate Virginians, particularly those in hard-to-count communities from all corners of the Commonwealth, in order to ensure there is a complete count.

MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Complete Count Commission is to serve as a trusted voice and resource to educate, empower, and engage all communities for the purpose of ensuring that everyone who lives in the Commonwealth of Virginia is counted in the 2020 Census.

VISION

Our vision is a thriving Commonwealth where everyone counts and every community matters; where every person who lives in Virginia has equitable access to opportunities, resources, and representation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



PHONE
(804) 786-2441



EMAIL
virginiacompletecount@governor.virginia.gov



WEBSITE
commonwealth.virginia.gov/vacompletecount

Attention All Youth Pastors, Youth Directors, and Youth Workers!

BGCVA inviting you to join the Baptist General Convention of Virginia's Youth Ministry Advisory Team (YMAT). Together, we will plan, implement, evaluate and elevate BGCVA'S Youth Ministry in conjunction with both our 29 associations and 1079 churches. The YMAT will develop and design strategic plans and programs and other events in your area as well as give leadership to statewide engagements.

The conference calls are on each Tuesday at 5:30 PM.

Dial: [1-605-313-4819](tel:1-605-313-4819) Code: [765640#](tel:765640#)

For questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Executive Minister Whitaker 804-228-2421 (office) or executiveminister@bgcva.org.

We look forward to working with you!

Blessings and Peace!