



OPERATION FEED THE CHILDREN



Carolyn Bacon delivering lunches to children in the community



Jazelle and Kournieshia excited about lunch

With the spread of the coronavirus across the state of Mississippi and the nation, In His Steps has sought wisdom from the Lord in how to move forward in the midst of this crisis. Our first priority remains to serve God and love others well, but we knew this would look different during this particular season. In mid-March, when the virus began making its way a little closer to home, In His Steps looked around the Canton community and pinpointed the needs that would

inevitably arise once the state shut down. One of the main needs we saw was that with the closure of the schools, many of the children in the Saw Mill Quarters neighborhood in Canton would not have consistent access to breakfast and lunch provided by the school.

Mrs. Carolyn Bacon immediately began praying over how In His Steps could most effectively provide food for the



Ralph and Melody give a thumbs up

students in the Sawmill Quarters, and the Lord quickly revealed that In His Steps would be able to provide lunch for the students three times a week. When asked why In His Steps made the decision to provide lunch for the students, Mrs. Bacon said, "It was a Word from the Lord. We knew that this would give us an opportunity to demonstrate God's love and to follow the examples Christ set in Scriptures." Trusting that the Lord would provide the necessary supplies for In His Steps as He did for Jesus and the disciples when they fed the 5,000, the staff and some volunteers got to work putting together bagged lunches with sandwiches, chips, fruit, and juice to deliver to 50-60 students on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Within a few days of deciding to provide lunch for the students, **the Lord directed several local church groups to call In His Steps and ask how they could help**

during this time. A life group from Broadmoor Baptist Church in Madison stepped up to provide lunch on Mondays, Fellowship Bible Church and First United Methodist Church in Canton both volunteered to supply lunches on Wednesdays, and Madison Heights PCA in Madison offered to bring lunches for Fridays and an extra snack for the weekend. With the generosity of these local church groups, In His Steps is able to distribute 50-60 bagged lunches in the Sawmill Quarters every other day. While ministry certainly looks different for us during this season, the coronavirus has also offered a opportunity to build stronger, more personal relationships with the community in the Sawmill Quarters.

As we continue Operation Feed the Children, we ask for your prayers! We also ask that you would pray for the eyes of the lost to be opened to the love of God being poured out over them during this time. We believe this time is set aside by God for a purpose, and we hope that you'll continue praying with us over those He is calling to salvation.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

In such uncertain and unsettling days, "it is good to know that the LORD is our rock and our fortress and our deliverer." (Psalm 18:2) The board, staff and I are also grateful for the constant partnership that we have with many Christian friends.

In the midst of the growing needs, God is giving us more opportunities to serve our community. Therefore, **we have chosen to trust and not fret. We have chosen not to focus on the "Why" of the pandemic and other issues but to focus on the "Who".** The "Who" being the Almighty God who has the whole world under His Control. **We have chosen to be instruments of God's love** as the needs grow. Pray for us. Let us not forget that everything is under God's sovereign control and is working out according to His will. Love you all.

Bro. Bacon

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYERS

FAITH OVER FEAR

As our world has changed quickly over the past few weeks with the coronavirus moving closer to home and impacting the lives of neighbors and friends, panic has settled in the hearts of many. With all the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, fear has become a natural reaction and has deeply influenced how we respond to this pandemic.

Thankfully we do not serve a God who is swayed by fear and doubt. We serve a sovereign Lord who reminds us time and time again, "do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand," (Isaiah 41:10). What good news it is that even in the midst of a global pandemic, the Creator of the Universe is present with us! God is not taken by surprise by COVID-19, nor is He overwhelmed by what is happening on this earth. Instead, He promises to offer that same peace and assurance to His children who choose to reach out and take hold of peace.

When we allow fear to dictate our choices and actions, we also allow selfishness to take root in our hearts. Fear, at its core, forces us to look inward at what we might be lacking and then causes that voice of doubt to whisper to our hearts that we have to put ourselves first because no one else will. Fear tells us that we don't have enough--enough time, energy, and money--to give to others because we need it for ourselves.

But Love tells us that we are cared for more than the sparrows of the sky and the lilies of the field, and that we are given life abundant through Jesus Christ. When we make the choice to abandon fear and selfishness and focus on the truth Jesus Christ set before us in Matthew 6, that our Heavenly Father knows exactly what we need and when we need it, then we are free to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you," (Matthew 6:33). We are free to love our neighbor boldly and fully demonstrate God's Kingdom here on earth. We are free to trust that our God will provide for our needs consistently, and that He will use us in great ways to love others the way He loved us first. Today, let's all choose to put faith over our fear and demonstrate love and compassion to those around us.

S. Moore

PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS

- * **Pray for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers responsible for fighting the new coronavirus.**

God, as more people get sick, healthcare workers and first responders are working longer hours with fewer supplies and with more risk of contracting the new coronavirus themselves. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring Your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job.

Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease's spread.

- * **Pray for leaders responsible for making decisions about the new coronavirus.**

Father, we seek Your wisdom daily. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. We pray that they communicate clearly, truthfully, and calmly — with each other and with the public — and that their messages are received and heeded. May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/prayers-people-affected-new-coronavirus>

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM PASTORS

God is in control, he is sovereign, we can't worry about the what-ifs we can only take it one day at a time. The battle has been won, Christ is on the throne. It's okay to lament, God is big enough to handle our emotions and they are precious to Him. He wants us there. The question is where do we end, do we end with the lament or do we end with rejoicing?

Peter Aberle,
Orthodox Congregational Church

I have shared the Psalm 23 with Fellowship Bible Church and told them three things from that Psalm to encourage them. 1) **We have to let the Good Shepherd lead us** even as we follow the advice of the medical community. 2) **We have to depend on the Good Shepherd to protect us.** We have to remember only God can protect us from the unseen enemy because God knows it fully. 3) **We have to remember that the Good Shepherd will be our provision** even though we might be out of work and facing financial problems. If we are going to get through the pandemic, we have to rely on the Word of God as our source.

Earvin Jones, Fellowship Bible Church

I'm sure many of us are experiencing much of the same anxieties and hardships due to this pandemic. These include the fear of sickness and death, the uncertainties of the future, and isolation from one another. Let me share a word of encouragement with you so that you will endure these times with the Lord. These three daily practices of connecting have helped me a great deal and I hope the same for you.

1. **CONNECT** to the Lord through prayer. Philippians 4:6 tells us to not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer...let your requests be made known to God.
2. **CONNECT** to the Word of God. Psalm 119:143 says, "Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight." The one word here I want to point out is the word "but." This word contrasts two opposite human experiences; anguish and delight. Every time I turn on the news I hear trouble and anguish. It is the opposite when I take in the Word of God which brings delight. Let me encourage you to connect to the Word in various ways: read the Word in big chunks, meditate slowly and hear the preached word regularly.
3. **CONNECT** with one another. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reminds us that two are better than one and a cord of three is not quickly broken. This means we are stronger together. Let me encourage you daily to connect with someone and be an instrument of God.

We will get through all this together with the Lord. Let us not just simply endure but thrive during these times. I look forward to seeing you all and serving the Lord together soon. God bless you.

Steve Choi, Crossway Community Church