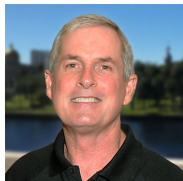




AUGUST 2020

RE-OPENING SMALL GROUPS: FROM ZOOM TO "HYBRID" ZOOM GROUPS



Many of our churches have been streaming their worship services for years. It is safe to say that the great majority of our churches have been streaming (or learning how to stream) their services since March, 2020. COVID-19 has ushered in a new normal for pastors and churches as we all try to figure out how to progress through the pandemic, which is now in its fifth month.

As we have walked through this together, the TBBA has given special attention to how our churches have overseen their re-opening strategies. Most now have resumed some form of public worship gatherings. Early on, we encouraged many churches to transition their entire small group schedules to online groups in Zoom. Few churches have chosen to return to on-site or off-site Sunday School and small group gatherings and most churches have not resumed any type of Sunday School fellowship at all.

In every case, I fear the prolonged loss of in-person fellowship in small groups will cause some to permanently step away from Christ and the church. While continuing to offer Zoom groups, I believe that it is critical that we are able to gather some church members together in face to face small groups.

Until that kind of fellowship can be fully and safely restored (whether in home-based groups or back on our campuses, or both), I believe that it is best to think "outside the box" and get some of the people safely gathering together in small groups.

One way to do this is for smaller churches to lead their adult Sunday School classes to meet in the fellowship hall, sanctuary, and a large Sunday School assembly room (with their children, if applicable). One or two classes most likely could safely distance and meet in each environment. Because many churches only have a few Sunday School classes, this could make a significant impact on the entire church family.

Another great idea is for Sunday School classes in larger rooms or in off-campus groups to rotate their members to meet every other week or every third week. This would of course have to be done while maintaining distancing.

One church in particular has moved their Sunday School and small groups into what they are calling Zoom "hybrid" groups. This is a classroom (or living room) setting, where people who want to gather together in person can spread out enough in a larger room to meet distancing guidelines. At the same time, in that same room, they start a Zoom meeting on :

computer that is connected to a TV or monitor - complete with a Web cam, a 360-degree microphone, and some speakers. And voila, it's a hybrid group: folks meeting in person while meeting with folks who are joining the group remotely.

None of this is ideal, but in a season where the word "unprecedented" can actually be used correctly, it's something. And I hope you will be encouraged by these ideas. I also hope you will share with me and our Associational churches how you have used your own creative ways to make the best of the situation.

Mike

SEPTEMBER EVENTS



Executive Committee Meeting

September 21, 2020

10:30 a.m. to noon

ON ZOOM

Join us for this important business meeting and time of prayer and discussion for our senior pastors and their guests. Thank you for making this a priority if you are able, as we require - per our constitution and by laws - a quorum of pastors present in order to have an "official" meeting

Please RSVP to Jan Jones to get the Zoom Meeting Link.

OCTOBER EVENTS



TBBA Annual Celebration - In Person and Online

Sunday, October 11, 2020

5:00 p.m.

First Baptist Tampa

302 W Kennedy Blvd. | Tampa FL 33606

Join us for this very special time of celebration and worship, as we gather in person at FBC Tampa in their worship center with appropriate distancing practices.

And, if you are not yet ready to attend a public worship gathering, we will be live-streaming (and archiving) the meeting on www.fbctampa.org.

No RSVP Needed. Call Jan Jones (813) 935-3839 for more info.



Save the Date **Conversational Evangelism Training**

October 25, 2020

Location TBA

12:30 p.m. | lunch provided

Only \$10/person

Save the date for this super evangelism training with special guest, Jared Looney of Global City Mission Initiative. Jared is an urban church planting strategist who loves helping pastors and churches learn how to get better at starting and maintaining engaging conversations with lost people.

This training will be informative and practical, as Jared will lead an interactive classroom setting and then break the large group up into teams to practice what has been taught.

We hope you will come to this training and then take what you learned back to your churches.

[Email Jan Jones to RSVP and get on the mailing list for details as soon as they are available](#)

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



Navigating the New COVID-19 World

The phrase *Coming Alongside* has taken on a new and deeper meaning for the TBBA staff during the pandemic. We have thrown out the old playbook and strove to repeatedly and individually reach out to every pastor to help him in any way possible. We have not been meeting in person but we have been using a wonderful "oldie but goodie" technological device called the telephone to keep in touch. Also we have become intimately acquainted with a more recent technological device called Zoom.

It has been our joy to have been of assistance to pastors and leaders in the following ways and more ...

- being a friend who listens, prays, and offers emotional and spiritual encouragement
- offering monthly Zoom prayer gatherings
- helping with streaming of Sunday AM worship services
- helping with implementation of on-line church giving
- producing a video on how to use Zoom meetings for Sunday School and small groups
- offering assistance to learn about and possibly apply for Cares Act financial aid
- offering insight on safely re-gathering
- offering Zoom mtgs. on listening, learning, & healing during racial unrest

We do not know when a new normal may finally arrive but we are holding on to God's promise Psalm 127:1-2.

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.
- 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.

COMMUNITY & MINISTRY

Manhattan Baptist

- Manhattan Baptist Church located in South Tampa, is looking for an experienced pianist. The part-time pianist will be paid \$100 per week. The applicant must be willin to work Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings for choir rehearsal. Applicants ca contact their Worship Leader, Peter Jensen at the church at 813-831-1951 for more information.



Coming Alongside
Tampa Bay Baptist Association
1060 W Busch Blvd. | Tampa, FL 33612
(813) 935-3839
www.TBBA.org

STAY CONNECTED:

