

Those to Serve

Temporary Worship Schedule

All public worship assemblies (including NHC) have been suspended until further notice.

Worship and Bible class will be livestreamed on the following dates and times:

Sunday, March 29: 10 am & 6 pm

Wednesday, April 1: 7 pm

Sunday, April 5: 10 am & 6 pm

There are several ways for each member to participate, even if you do not use a computer or the internet.

1. A link will be sent out before each service time by email and text if you would like to use your computer (this is the best method)
2. It may be viewed from Facebook Live.
3. The Zoom app can be downloaded for easy access on your iPhone or Android device
4. A phone number may be obtained to call in and listen.

Contact Us

Elders

Bill Burns - 738-9737

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Jeff Turner - 738-8678

Preacher

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wscoc@blomand.net

Church Office

Monday - Thursday (9:00-3:00)

836-3790 or 836-8194

westspartaoffice@blomand.net

Online

westspartacoc.org

[simple-faith \(Facebook\)](#)

Worship Times

Sunday

Bible Classes: 9:00 am

Worship: 10:00 am and 6:00 pm (2nd & 5th Sunday afternoon worship at 1:15pm)

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages: 7:00 pm

West Sparta Messenger

westspartacoc.org

WHEN PLANS CHANGE

Derrick Coble

All of us are experiencing something we have never experienced before. Schedules have been disrupted, events have been cancelled, our work approach has shifted, dates are being pushed back, and even the normal worship assembly has been suspended. Of course, it is all in the interest of our health with the onset of the Coronavirus. Yet, it is still frustrating not being able to proceed with what we had planned to do. It definitely reminds us of what James said about making lots of plans—"Ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (James 4:14). Plans are always subject to change! If anybody realized this the most, it had to be the apostle Paul.

Just think about how Paul began as a persecutor of Christians. His plan was to take Christians as prisoners to Jerusalem, but that all changed when Jesus appeared to him and he obeyed the Gospel in Damascus instead (Acts 9:18). Later it was Saul (Paul) whom the Holy Spirit separated for missionary work (Acts 13:1-3). Paul would preach in the Synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, but the next week his plans changed as the Jews were filled with envy and Paul turned his attention to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45,46). Next, in Iconium Paul preached for a long time but there was an assault made and he fled to Lystra where he was stoned and then to Derbe (Acts 14:3,6,19,20). When the next missionary journey began, Paul planned for him and Barnabas to go again and visit the brethren in every city where they had preached, but that plan even changed as Barnabas wanted to take John Mark and Paul did not (Acts 15:36-41). Paul chose Silas (along with Timothy) but their plans changed when they wanted to preach in Asia and Bithynia because the Holy Spirit did not allow them (Acts 16:6,7). In Corinth, as the church was growing, perhaps out of fear of more persecution, Paul planned to leave, but the Lord changed his plans and

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he stayed for a year and six months (Acts 18:1-11). As Paul continued to preach amidst persecution, his great desire was to see Rome (Acts 19:21). He would ultimately fulfill this desire, but not as he planned—he would be a prisoner (Acts 23:11). For two years, he was under “house arrest” but he continued to preach the Gospel (Acts 28:30,31)—just not as he planned!

So, what does this mean for us? Even though our normal schedule and plans have changed, we are still Christians and must serve and worship God no matter what. Paul did not let the various changes and extremes in his life cause him to forsake this duty. Neither did the early Christians who had been gathering for worship at Jerusalem when their lives were changed. For their own safety, they were scattered and had to continue to worship for a time outside of a formal gathering (Acts 8:1-4). The same is true for us. What has happened to the church for now (in removing ourselves physically from each other and our communities) is certainly not something that we planned, nor is it something that will continue. It doesn't mean that we have removed ourselves from working for God or worshipping God, it just means our plans have changed temporarily. For Paul, his troubles actually worked out for the “furtherance of the gospel” (Phi. 1:12). It could be, that in the end, the same could be said for the church today (Rom. 8:28).

News and Notes

Disaster Relief Contribution: As of Wednesday, March 25, the total disaster relief contribution was \$15,115 and we still have some donations that have not arrived yet!! The elders are always encouraged by the generous nature of the West Sparta congregation to help those in need.

Regular Weekly Contribution: Please mail your regular weekly contribution to the church office, until our normal service times resume.

More News and Notes

Nursing Home Service: Our weekly service at NHC is cancelled until further notice—at the request of NHC.

Short Mountain Bible Camp: Please take note that the board of directors at SMBC has cancelled all events at Short Mountain in the month of May. Therefore, the White county and Warren county week has been rescheduled to June 28-July 3. Please make a note of this change and spread the word.

Sympathy: We extend our sympathy to the family of Loyce Wolaver on the death of her sister, Mildred Wright. There will be a graveside service this Friday at Elrod Cemetery.

Cumberland Caverns Singing that was planned for Friday, April 3rd, has been rescheduled for August 1. Sign-up sheet to come soon.

2020 Commitment Sheets: The 2020 commitment sheets are in your mailboxes. The elders are asking that one form per Christian in your family (front and back) be completed and returned to the office by March 31, 2020. We know some of you have recently completed a commitment sheet, but there are new items on this updated form. Please complete another one, anyway. This way, we will have an up to date record for every person and make assignments accordingly. We appreciate your cooperation.

Response: *Mary Beth Whitson* responded to the invitation last Sunday night, asking to be restored to the church and for forgiveness for past sins and for prayers to help her in her daily life. Let's all be an encouragement to her.

Sick: *Judy Null* is recovering well from her back surgery. Kerri is staying with her and helping her during her recovery.

Mike Moore continues to be at home under the care of hospice. He is in serious condition.