

Our Georgetown church family's year in review



MISSION REPORT 2020: *See the Potential*

Georgetown church of Christ

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SEE THE POTENTIAL: 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

“Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” - *Jesus Christ (John 4:35-38)*

As 2020 began, we had a goal.

As we continue becoming more like Jesus, we will SEE THE POTENTIAL in each other and in the little things we do each day in 2020 to:

- *Bring people in our lives and around the world to see Jesus.*
- *Rejoice that Jesus made us a part of His church in Georgetown.*
- *Work together to develop each other's gifts through involvement and mentorship.*

We prepared a budget for it. We planned events to advance it. Little did we know how much our world was about to change. Yet, **God knew**; and in a year of pain, adversity, fear, and loss, He still helped us to **SEE THE POTENTIAL**. While things looked much different than what we had planned, Jesus still reigned, His Spirit still led, and God was still glorified.

Even though we have more road to travel before the COVID-19 pandemic is truly behind us, we have so much to thank God for this year. Opportunities that we might never have had otherwise have been seized. Compassion, love, and incredible creativity have welled up and overflowed in all sorts of places. We saw the potential and can rejoice in what God accomplished in Georgetown, SC in 2020.

BRING PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES AND AROUND THE WORLD TO SEE JESUS

As we navigated the challenges, fear, and pain of 2020, the power of God's Word and the hope of the gospel was more needed than ever. So, we did not let up: in fact, with a little extra technology and a lot of creativity, we experienced more opportunities to connect with God and bring the people in our lives to Jesus than ever before. We rejoiced to see **Steven Miller** put on Christ in baptism in April, and we are confident seed is being planted and watered for God to give future increase!

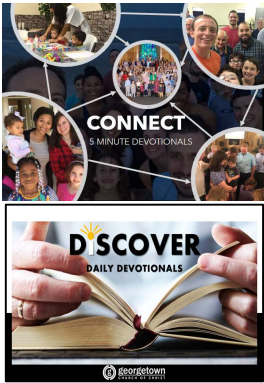
Our **sermon series** in 2020 (available at georgetownchurchofchrist.com/podcasts-sermons) included:

- *Selfie: What Our Words Say About Us*
- *The Letters of Paul*
- *Ordinary People, Extraordinary God*
- *The Mystery of Marriage*
- *Living Water: Never Be Thirsty Again* (Sermons on the Holy Spirit)
- *Climbing Higher: Songs of Ascents* (Psalm 120-134)
- *That They May Be One: Learning How to Be United*
- *Don't Quit Your Day Job: Glorifying God from 9 to 5*

- *Do Not Be Afraid*
- We were also blessed by encouraging lessons preached by **John Harrison**, **Lance Justice**, and **Curt Harbuck** (visiting on behalf of Southeastern Children's Home).

Our **Bible Studies** in 2020 (available at georgetownchurchofchrist.com/podcasts-classes) included:

- *The Begging Place* (Ladies Fellowship led by Lorna Thompson)
- *Wisdom for the Home: Proverbs 1-9* (led by Jay McClary)
- *The Life of David* (led by Larry Sheehan)
- *MISSION 1 Training* (led by Dan Hager)
- *When the Son of Man Comes* (led by Dan Hager)
- *Worship with Reverence and Awe* (led by Dan Hager)
- *Christ in the Old Testament* (led by Dan Hager)



We also **expanded** our proclamation of God's Word with daily devotional videos. Recognizing the opportunity to grow closer to God through the pandemic's disruption, we released **CONNECT 5 Minute Devos** on *Finding God in Our Desolate Place*, *Following Jesus Daily*, *Healing Our Divisions*, and *The Hard Sayings of Jesus* for a total of **148 videos**. Beginning on November 30, we launched our new **DiSCOVER Daily Devotionals**. This series explores how to study the Bible to discover who God is, who people are, and how to have our lives transformed as we obey and share it.

While our children miss their Bible classes, God has led us in a variety of ways to continue to support our families in raising children who love the Lord. Throughout the spring, Rachel, Asher, and Ron-the-puppet Hager starred in a series of Children's Bible Lesson videos (available at georgetownchurchofchrist.com/childrens-bible-lessons).



As we resumed in-person assemblies in the summer, we began devoting the first 15-20 minutes of every Bible study to our children by singing songs, having a lesson, and praying at their level. Through these efforts, our children - not to mention many of our adults - have grown in their knowledge of the Bible (including memorizing its 66 books), in their love of singing (including reading shape notes and four-part harmony), and in the habits of prayer. Then in November, **Debbie Justice** and **Lauren Seaton** - with great support from many of our sisters - launched our **One Room Sunday Schoolhouse**, where our elementary school and pre-school age children can learn the Bible in a safe environment. **John Harrison** and **Steven Skipper** started a similar class for our pre-teens. This approach helps meet the needs of our families now and provides a starting point for gradually restoring our Bible education program in the months ahead.

Though we had no way of knowing it, our work in recent years to bolster our online presence proved to be essential to seeing the potential in 2020. When the pandemic forced many to avoid public gatherings, God used our church website and Facebook page to not only help us stay connected to one another but to reach many we may not have been able to otherwise. From January 1 - December 14, 2020, our church website - www.georgetownchurchofchrist.com - had **over 6,600 visits** from **4,500 unique visitors** (i.e. different computers or devices). This was much higher than the 4,300 visits by 3,200 unique visitors we had in 2019. Of our 2020 website visits:

- 37% came from South Carolina
- 12% from North Carolina
- A combined total of 9% came from Ohio, West Virginia, and Maryland
- 6% came from Texas
- A combined total of 5% came from Florida, Tennessee, and Georgia

Our website is truly helping us “**go into all the world and proclaim the gospel**” (Mark 16:15). Nearly 20% of our website visits came from other states and 10% were from other countries!

During a snapshot of June through November, we published an average of **39 posts per month** of worship services, Bible studies, daily devotionals, blogposts, podcast links, and more. Each post **reached an average of 395 people** (meaning it appeared in their Facebook newsfeed) and **engaged an average of 51 people** (meaning they watched, liked, commented, or shared).

<i>Type of Post</i>	<i># of Posts</i>	<i>Avg. Facebook Reach</i>	<i>Avg. Facebook Engagement</i>
Worship	27	363	74
Daily Devo	107	630	64
Bible Study	51	158	44
Promo	9	150	22
Blogpost	26	165	21
Podcast Link	14	102	12
Total: Jun - Nov	234	395	51

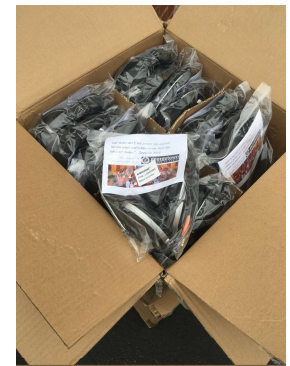
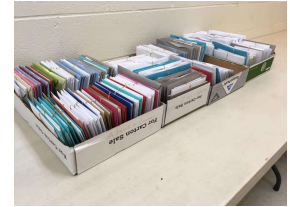


Of these posts, the powerful video of a diverse group of our church family members reading **Ephesians 4:1-6** and discussing unity had a massive impact. Our most shared video ever, it **reached 2,441** and **engaged 402 people**. Our second most shared video was our Sunday July 26 worship service when Dan preached “**That They May**

Be One: Out of Step” from Galatians 2:11-14. This lesson - challenging humanity’s divisive attitudes and showing how Jesus can change us - **reached 3,225** and **engaged 219 people**.

Even with the restraints of physical distancing, our efforts to bring people to Jesus were not limited to the computer. In May, we sent the *House to House Heart to Heart* “Hope Issue” to **4,964 homes** in Georgetown. This special issue with articles sharing the hope we have in Jesus was sent to every household in Georgetown city limits and in the Kensington community. Bible studies have also sprung up in homes, workplaces, and even prison as doors for the Word have been opened.

Along with the pain and disruption of the pandemic, there have been many opportunities to show God’s love and comfort while planting and watering for the good news of Jesus through them. God worked through **Tony Jordan**, Community Deacon, to lead us in showing His love to the families of area students. Working closely with school administrators, we led a **card shower** in May through which we provided over **700 cards** with small gifts and coupons for area businesses to the over **222 members** of the **Georgetown High School class of 2020**. After offering assistance to our neighbor **Kensington Elementary** in the fall, we identified opportunities for providing **virtual school help** to struggling families and **60 headsets** that included a card with Jeremiah 33:3 - *“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known”*. Each interaction is pointing people to Jesus!



Our **Thanksgiving Pack the Pulpit** set a new record for our congregation: **1,091 lbs** of food and **\$610** were provided, enough for Helping Hands to provide Thanksgiving dinner to 85 families in need! Food coming from our church family was labeled with our name and website so that the recipients were pointed to Jesus by our act of love. Through the efforts of our members, the **Highwood community**, **Strovis**, and **Tidelands Family Medicine** also contributed food.

REJOICE THAT JESUS MADE US A PART OF HIS CHURCH IN GEORGETOWN



Even in such a difficult year, God gave us so many reasons to rejoice. The celebration started when our **Senior Team** was once again named **South Carolina Bible Bowl champions** in February. **Jerry Mercer, Dolores Phipps, Lannie Rouse, and Larry Sheehan** glorified God through their diligent study of **Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon**.

As the pandemic and related shutdowns caused stress to skyrocket in April, our church family took the lead in conducting a **prayer vigil at Georgetown Memorial Hospital**. The back of the parking lot was filled as our church family was joined by members of the community in a time of prayer, Scripture reading, and singing from our cars in support of our local caregivers.





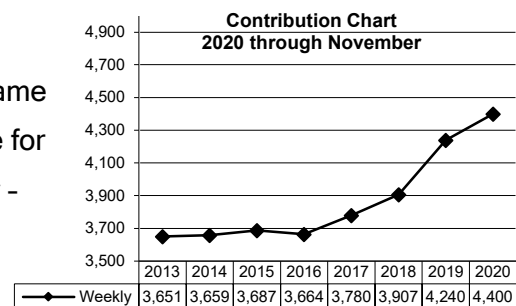
The uplifting impact of the event on the caregivers and community was evident. In addition to several mentions in the local news, Tidelands Health produced a beautiful video of the event (available at youtu.be/JFcheeZpACM) and included multiple images from it in a touching “Holiday Message of Gratitude” commercial in December (available at youtu.be/pkXmyB-ajyE). God’s use of these means to amplify His message of comfort and hope is amazing: our church family was even mentioned in a *Washington Post* op-ed on April 3, “Our Better Angels are Among Us” by Kathleen Parker!

Yet as exciting as these events were, the potential God showed us in countless acts of kindness among so many of our members gives us even more reason to rejoice. Cards were sent, calls were made, supplies were delivered, meals were provided, and homemade communion bread recipes were shared. Families took the initiative to do an **Easter Egging**, hiding candy-filled eggs in the yards of our members’ and friends’ homes for their young children to find. **Parades** became a way to celebrate birthdays and honor graduates, like **Megan Mercer** upon her graduation from nursing school and **Manuel McClain** upon graduating high school.



Our devotion to **personal prayer** and **praying as a church** took on a whole new dimension throughout 2020. God was glorified and hearts were touched through our **Hours of Prayer** as a church in August and November. The kingdom advanced through the individual and small group prayers of members, including specific efforts praying for growth of His kingdom here and for those who are imprisoned.

As we first gave ourselves to God, we also excelled in giving. Budgeting for an average weekly contribution of \$4,100 (the same budget as 2019), we once again showed how genuine our love for the Lord and others really is through our giving. From January - November 2020, our **average weekly contribution** was **\$4,400**, exceeding both our budget and last year’s average.



Having been supplied seed for sowing, we put that money to work advancing God’s kingdom. In addition to the \$31,000 in regularly budgeted support for Community Outreach, Financial Assistance, and Missions, we sent additional support to important ministries that were hit hard in 2020, including:

- A special contribution of **\$8,063** to **Palmetto Bible Camp** in August;
- A special contribution of **\$7,723** to **Southeastern Children’s Home** in August, followed by our **coin can drive** raising another **\$1,412** in December; and,
- A special contribution of **\$5,000** to **Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort** in September.

2020 also provided multiple opportunities to address updates to our facilities. **Steven Skipper**, Buildings & Grounds Deacon, oversaw work to **replace broken glass panes** in the front and back

windows, to **prevent moisture-related damage** from the baptistry, and to **ensure our fire safety measures** were up to code. **Jared Bardon**, Security Deacon, also led the installation of doorbell and other security cameras to optimize the safety of our assemblies and church office. We also upgraded our **media room computer and camera** to better support our growing media ministry.

WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP EACH OTHER'S GIFTS THROUGH INVOLVEMENT AND MENTORSHIP

As 2020 began, we undertook several important steps to learn from Jesus' example and help our servant leaders grow. Monthly group meetings with deacons were replaced with **one-on-one mentoring** with a single elder, freeing up time and increasing our focus and support. **Brandon Valentin** was appointed to serve as our **Fellowship Deacon**. **Jared Bardon** transitioned to **Security Deacon**, a newly created role for our church family to assess needs, to develop plans, and to organize and train volunteers for keeping our assemblies safe. As the challenges of 2020 became apparent, God blessed us so much by having already adopted these important changes.

Our **elders John Harrison, Lance Justice, Jay McClary, and Larry Sheehan** spent many hours in discussion and prayer determining how best to safely shepherd us through the pandemic. The fruit of their efforts is evident in the health and the unity we have enjoyed. The wonderful **Pastor Appreciation Day** observance that **Brandon Valentin** led for them in October with support from his wife **Nia** and his fellow deacons **Tony Jordan, Nick McClary, and Steven Skipper** was well-deserved.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of strong, Christ-like elders and deacons is the environment they create for every member to be a part of what God is doing. We witnessed that when an incredibly creative **Minister Appreciation Shower** delightfully surprised and generously blessed the Hagers in June. It was visible in the valuable update to the **Food Team plans** and the well-organized transition from **Jenna Jordan** to **Lannie Rouse** as our new **Food Team Coordinator**. It is also seen in the efforts of so many to enable us to assemble wisely and safely, including **Luis Chastain's** advice and communion preparation, **Debbie Justice's** preparation of children's materials, **Vicki Keller's** communion preparation and cleaning, **Kathy Taylor's** mask making, **Lorna Thompson's** door opening, **Brandon Valentin's** cleaning, and others. With the addition of Zoom to allow those not assembling in person to still connect with one another and join our services, the work of **Debbie Justice, Heather McClary, Jesse McClary, Justin McClary, Nick McClary, and Brandon Valentin** in Media has truly been invaluable. 2020 also brought **Brent McClary's** first devotional in February, as well as **Jacob and Tyler Bardon's** first public Scripture readings during our **August Hour of Prayer**. **Luis Chastain** led the Lord's Supper for the first time, and **Brick Shubrick** blessed us with many heartfelt opening prayers.

While 2020 has been so different than any of us planned, God has shown us clearly how much can be accomplished when we work together with Him and one another. While many scheduled church

activities were cancelled, they have been more than replaced as small groups of Christians have gathered for fellowship, prayer, and Bible study all on their own, producing visible spiritual growth. Yet, the pandemic has not meant the cancellation of all church events thanks to careful planning and creative leadership. Early in the pandemic, **Jared Bardon** safely and successfully



convened a **small group** to train on security procedures and plans. Over Labor Day weekend, our **Family Retreat at Palmetto Bible Camp** led by **Brandon and Nia Valentin** and **Larry Sheehan** was a tremendous blessing to the small, diverse group who participated. We trained to follow Jesus daily, all while enjoying great fellowship and beautiful weather in God's good creation while everyone back home was blessed by a great sermon by **Lance Justice**, children's lesson by **Nick McClary**, and Bible Study by **Jay McClary**. In October, **Nick and Akela McClary** and **Brandon and Nia Valentin** led us in a **fun, safe Trunk-or-Treat** that gave so much joy to our children and great encouragement to our adults. In November, **Kathy Taylor, Nikki Thomas, and Gracin Farwell** worked closely with **Brandon and Nia Valentin** to plan and execute another **Thanksgiving meal** that encouraged the **20+ people** who participated, whether they joined the physically distanced meal or received a drop-off dinner box. Even with the very real danger of the pandemic, God showed us clearly the good He will do when we faithfully work with Him and each other to still advance His purpose.

Perceiving God's New Thing

2020 looked nothing like we thought it would, but God still allowed us to **SEE THE POTENTIAL**. If anything, the events of the year have caused that theme to take on an even deeper meaning. While creation has groaned with illness, injustice, division, and death, our time in the wilderness of 2020 has produced spiritual growth and renewed hope. The words of **Isaiah 43:18-19** take on a special, personal meaning: "**Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.**" As we close this year, can we perceive the new thing God has been doing? There is so much good to celebrate, growth to recognize, and lessons to learn from Him. "**Behold, I am making all things new,**" God assures us (Revelation 21:5). As we enter 2021, let us all perceive what He is doing, work with Him, and be renewed!

Our Elders

John Harrison

Lance Justice

Jay McClary

Larry Sheehan

Our Deacons

Jared Bardon Tony Jordan Timmy Lee Nick McClary Jerry Mercer Steven Skipper Brandon Valentin

Our Minister

Dan Hager