

CHURCH REVITALIZATION *in the Midst of COVID-19*



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The current COVID-19 crisis has led pastors to consider how to keep their church functional and stable through his situation. Each church was at a different place before this crisis hit. Some SBC of Virginia churches were pursuing revitalization. It may appear that attempting to move a church through a revitalization process at this time would be impossible. However, several churches in Virginia are using this moment to continue to galvanize toward revitalization. One pastor doing this is Philip King at **Calvary Baptist Church** in Winchester, VA.

Two major components of revitalization efforts are often 1) **MINISTRY AND MOBILIZATION** to the surrounding community and 2) **LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**. This crisis has allowed Calvary Baptist Church to see its community with fresh eyes and understand the importance of digital platforms in a world of social distancing. King said, "By the grace of God, in the middle of this pandemic, our efforts to make some beneficial changes have been propelled forward. Really, by necessity, we've had to make these moves to continue to function and stay relevant, and the

church has been supportive." Calvary has been able to upgrade its digital presence because the situation has put added attention on this important area. King believes that the enhancements of digital technology would not have moved at this pace outside of the COVID-19 situation. Upgrading the website, enhancing video streaming, and embracing online giving have been virtually automatic.

Calvary Baptist Church has been able to communicate to the community of Winchester its desire to minister to them. Through drive-through prayer, drive-in church, and organizing community-wide prayer gatherings at the Winchester Medical Center, the church has been leading in ministering to the community. King explained, "The Lord has offered us an opportunity and a reminder to truly be the Church and to understand that the Church is not the facility, but the people of God coming together to minister to one another and the community." While there was a desire within the church to minister prior to the virus, this crisis has provided a fresh enthusiasm to reach out and minister in the Winchester community. ■