

OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

From Crisis to *Miraculous* Ministry



In ministry, as in life, the question is not if a crisis will hit but when. And it is usually at the most inconvenient and unexpected time.

For a local church in crisis, the question becomes whether the people will stay focused on the mission or will focus on the crisis and lose sight of the mission.

Oak Grove Baptist Church has a reputation for ministering to the needs of its community in Big Stone Gap, VA as well as through contributions to the shoebox ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

When Oak Grove least expected it, their pastor resigned. During this critical time, the church connected with their SBCV regional catalyst, Travis Ingle, who walked with them on the path forward. **The plan was simple:**

- prayer,
- communication,
- pulpit supply,
- and pastor search.

It was amazing how the Lord worked in and through that crisis. God not only kept this church on mission but also increased its ministry.

Through the process, the Lord led Oak Grove to a pastor with the same ministry philosophy and vision as the church. Under the leadership of its new pastor, Mike Sampson, the church began to grow in both number and ministry. Within just a year of leading the church, everything shut down due to another crisis—the global pandemic, COVID-19.

The church, however, was able to make some adjustments to its food pantry and feeding ministries. They met everyone outside rather than inside, where cars would line up as far as the eye could see to receive food, personal care items, and cleaning supplies.

Meals With a Mission

Oak Grove’s ministry volunteers gather to pray before they start each day. Although physical needs are important, the church knows everyone’s greatest

need is Jesus, so they make sure everyone hears the Gospel and can share their prayer needs.

Pastor Sampson takes the time to stop by each car because he knows the ministry is about more than just serving meals—it is a “Meals with a Mission” food pantry.

Valerie Lee, who serves as the ministry coordinator, shared, “It is so good to have a pastor and his wife on mission and serving with us.” Over the two years that Sampson has been with the church, they have built a second ministry building to accommodate the shoebox ministry, they are finishing up renovations to the worship center, and they have increased their capacity to store dry and refrigerated foods.

This past year, the 10th anniversary of Meals with a Mission, Oak Grove Baptist Church has distributed 51 tons of food!

Remember, when a crisis comes, stay focused on the mission and move forward. You are not alone, so keep pressing on! ■

