One Snowy Sunday
by Linda Peay

The Commonwealth of Virginia had its first blanket of snow during the first weekend of the new year. In such conditions, pastors and staff have to be ready to make decisions whether to hold worship service as usual and brave the elements with whom may attend, or to seek creative ways to reach their members in the safety of their own warm homes. Thanks to modern technology, a few BGAV churches were able to reach their members at church and beyond.

Facebook Live was launched in April 2016 as a way to post live videos to one’s Facebook page. Rev. Lynn Marstin of Midway Baptist Church in Gretna took advantage of this option to have worship together with his flock on a snowy Sunday. The service opened with his wife, Rhonda, playing a hymn on the antique family organ in their living room. Marstin followed Rhonda’s musical performance by explaining how the organ has been maintained throughout the years by referring to the instructions in its owner’s manual, which has been kept since the early 1900s. Marstin explained that Christ-followers should refer to our “owner’s manual”—the Bible—for instructions on how to live. Marstin’s live feed boasted nearly 1,000 views, 30+ shares, and over 100 comments.

Rev. Greg Soult of Antioch Baptist Church in Sandston also used Facebook Live on the snow day. Soult provided a 25-minute sermon on
Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus’ baptism. As he spoke to the audience, he could see comments and questions coming through in real-time. “I was very surprised by the number of people who were watching. The number of hits totaled four times our average Sunday attendance,” Soult said.

Dr. Bob Lee of Huguenot Road Baptist Church in North Chesterfield produced a YouTube video of his sermon and posted it on the church’s Facebook page. Lee also read Matthew 3:13-17 on Jesus’ baptism in the 13-minute video, which allowed the congregation to join together in worship from their homes. Lee reported that he also received positive feedback for this effort.

Just because a winter storm can slow us down and keep us inside, there are still options for churches to feel connected in worship. Pastors can be prepared for last-minute cancellations by using effective communication tools and creative technology to reach its members.

For more information about outreach ideas for your church, contact:

Susan McBride
Team Coordinator, Congregational Field Staff
Baptist General Association of Virginia
800.255.2428, ext. 2242
susan.mcbride@bgav.org

BGAV.org