

a NEW DEGREE of *Urgency*



INSTANT READINESS demonstrated by the local church

Dan Ellis, senior pastor at **Rileyville Baptist Church**, in Rileyville, VA, began to see smoke and feel 50 MPH gusts of wind. Immediately, he checked to find the location of the fire and found there was a major issue in the county. Ellis stated, "Severe winds had rekindled a recent prescribed burn, and arcing from downed power lines had started nearly a dozen forest fires throughout Page County."

Pastor Ellis quickly learned that the volunteer fire department was being stretched to the max and was quickly going through all their resources. The need for the moment was on-the-go meals.

Ellis, along with the Rileyville mission and outreach team, made a last-minute decision to pivot from their regular Wednesday evening Bible study to lead the church to make 100 on-the-go meals to feed the first responders. Ellis commented, "It was beautiful to see

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I knew we needed to demonstrate Christ's love ... ”



In collaboration with the SBCV, Rileyville Baptist Church purchased 20 \$100 gas gift cards to cover the cost of the fuel to run the volunteer firefighters' equipment. Pastor Ellis displays the cards.

the church body changing plans to join God in what He was doing. This sort of readiness should also be demonstrated by our churches in our local context; however, I have felt that pull to stay the course and do what we have always done. I'm glad we didn't on March 20th. Our study on hell that evening was abbreviated, but the prayer time at the end had a new degree of urgency for the lost."

Despite the ongoing forest fires, Rileyville was prepared to continue meeting the needs of the community. The Rileyville mission team learned that the first responders' fuel budget was running low and that the volunteers were struggling to cover the cost of fuel to run their equipment. In partnership with the SBCV, Rileyville purchased twenty \$100 gas cards for the volunteer firefighters. The cards were delivered with notes saying they were praying for them.

On Friday evening, the need was for hot meals. The Rileyville hospitality team, with financial support from the SBCV, promptly responded by cooking for and ministering to 125 firefighters. Rileyville was determined that even though they couldn't minister face-to-face with first responders, they would do everything in their power to show the love of Christ to their community.

Rileyville life groups showed the value of "doing life together" by coming together to protect one of

the member's homes that the fire had surrounded. Thankfully, God brought rain on Saturday to quench the fire and end the threat.

Rileyville is still meeting with area families who lost everything, sharing the hope of the Gospel with them, and seeking how God would call them to serve these hurting families. Please pray that God will open doors for Gospel conversations with those in need.

Pastor Ellis stated, "I certainly didn't know everything God was doing then, but I knew we needed to demonstrate Christ's love somehow. We needed to be the hands and feet of Christ

because we are His body. All this happened a week before Easter. On Resurrection Sunday, we had nearly two times our regular attendance, and many people walked forward to indicate that they had given their lives to Christ. As we were preparing for Easter Sunday, I believe God was preparing hearts throughout our county to see that life is short, our homes are temporary, and we all need to make sure we have a forever home in Heaven. We are thankful for the prayers and support of the SBCV during this time. We are not alone." ■



The church made a last-minute decision to pivot from their regular Wednesday evening Bible study to making 100 on-the-go meals to feed the first responders.