

Barbecue Baptist Church Delivers Meals, Message and a Little Levity Amid Pandemic

Before the barbecue trailer, there was the toilet paper popemobile.

With toilet paper hard to come by as stay-at-home orders took effect in many states earlier this year to flatten the curve of the coronavirus, Chad McMillan put the pastor of First Baptist Church of Navasota, Texas, on a trailer surrounded by plexiglass, “like the popemobile,” he said. He handed the pastor a T-shirt gun loaded with toilet paper, each roll wrapped with a Bible verse.

“And I said, ‘I want you to shoot toilet paper rolls to bless the community,’” said McMillan, the church’s pastor of students, evangelism and missions.

The toilet paper distribution went so well, he added a pulpit, sound system and piano so he could hold pop-up worship services while flinging the TP.

McMillan joked about adding a barbecue pit, too.

Then he did—and Barbecue Baptist Church was born.

Barbecue Baptist Church, an outreach of First Baptist, aims to bring a warm meal, a little levity and a reminder that people care to its community and beyond.

The church borrowed a catering trailer from a member and made an announcement on the local news in April: “Anybody who invites us to come, we will come to your house, and we will do a short worship service and give you a free barbecue meal,” McMillan said.

“People were staying in their homes, churches weren’t meeting and it was a real need people had,” he said.

In the first five weeks, Barbecue Baptist Church traveled around the county, serving about four meals a day, four days a week, McMillan said. Sometimes it would find a group of 20 people. Sometimes it would find a single elderly woman sitting on her porch.

Last month, the outreach decided to take the show on the road from Navasota to Nashville, visiting first responders and medical professionals in six different states across the South in seven days. On that trip alone, McMillan said, its team smoked 800 to 1,000 pounds of pork—using Post Oak wood, a Central-Texas style of barbecue.

Along with the barbecue, McMillan said he’s been sharing a message of hope based on a passage from the biblical book of Romans—about suffering producing perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

And he tries to share some humor.

That’s “not to make light of what’s happening,” he said, “but to try to give people a moment of levity and joy to know that God loves them, and we love them.”

McMillan said Barbecue Baptist Church is planning another road trip soon and hopes to continue even after the coronavirus pandemic ends. {eoa}

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