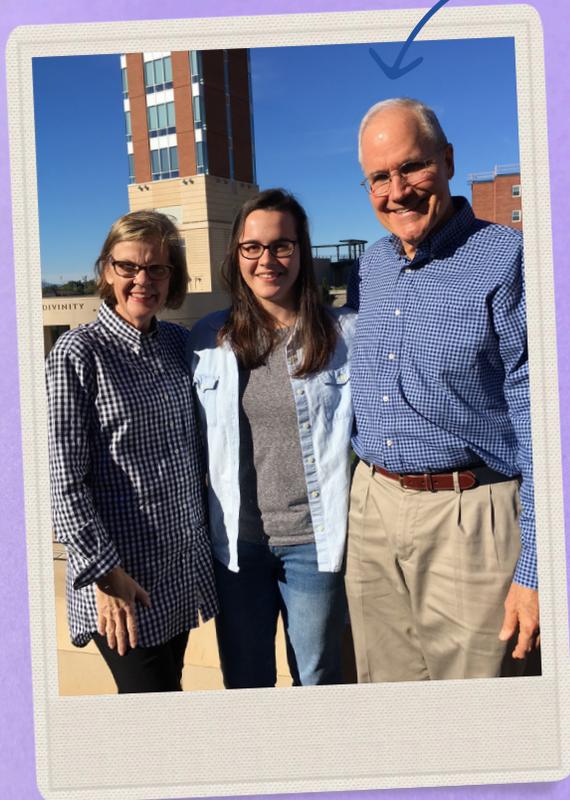


Seeing the Savior in a Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been filled with a myriad of struggles—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. But the NC Family staff has seen some silver linings come out of this difficult time, as God has continued to make Himself known and to shine His light in even a dark time.



Jere, Director of Community Impact and Counsel

I have seen in new and deeper ways how vital it is to stay in God's Word each day, so that I can know Him and His love and His sovereignty in the midst of any and every situation. During the pandemic, I have learned more about trusting God and seeking to glorify Him regardless of the circumstances.

I have once again experienced the blessing that God brings in testing, where He takes knowledge that is in my head about how to live and makes it part of who I am by changing my heart.

In addition to praying for God's comfort and healing and provision for others, I have prayed even more that God would draw each person to Himself. As significant as the challenges are for so many people, it has become even clearer that the most important thing in life is whether someone has a personal relationship with God.

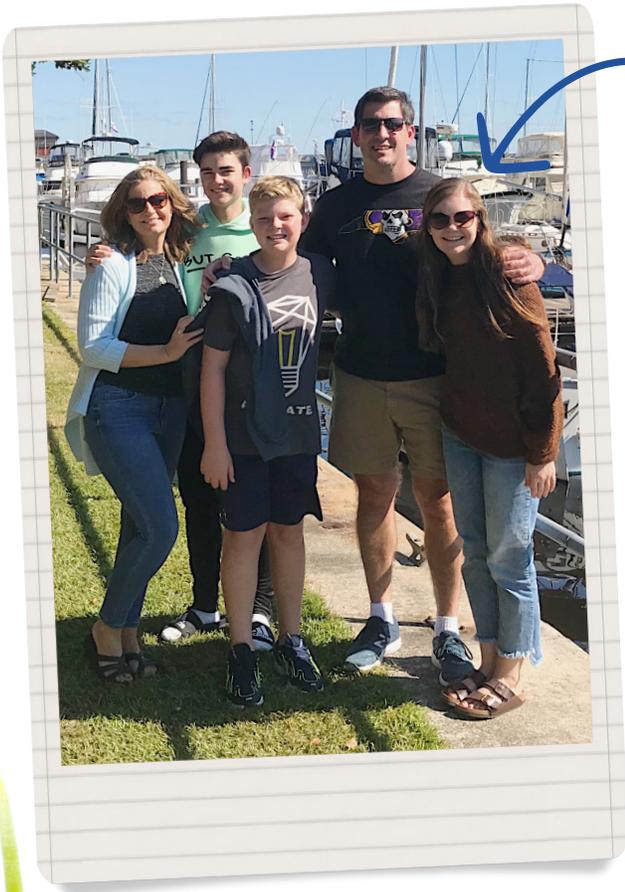
I want to pray more for others, and to let the Lord live and love through me so that He is glorified and He draws people to Himself. I want to keep this perspective not just during COVID-19, but every day for the rest of my life.



Calley, Communications Director

When rumors began to swirl in March of 2020 that there would be a quarantine, I panicked. The idea of quarantining in a small apartment held no allure for me whatsoever. But worse than that, I knew my parents would be strict “bubble” adherents, and I would not be allowed to see them for some time. But my parents graciously extended the invitation to me to move home and join their “bubble,” providing me with a loving family, a perfect dog, a nice open backyard, and a lot of free, home-cooked meals.

Honestly I expected there to be some conflict and tension, as most would if they were to move back in with their parents after having lived on their own as an adult. Conflict was bound to emerge. Yet, it rarely did. Instead, we easily fell into a routine involving daily walks with my dog, evening *Jeopardy!* competitions, regular COVID-19 research updates from my analytical father, and a lot of baking experiments with my mom, just to name a few. I experienced so much love and support, so much joy and laughter, so much deepening of relationships that I didn’t want quarantine to end. As my mother has said since quarantine ended and I moved back out, it was a precious experience with her grown daughter that she wouldn’t trade for the world.



Makenna, Intern

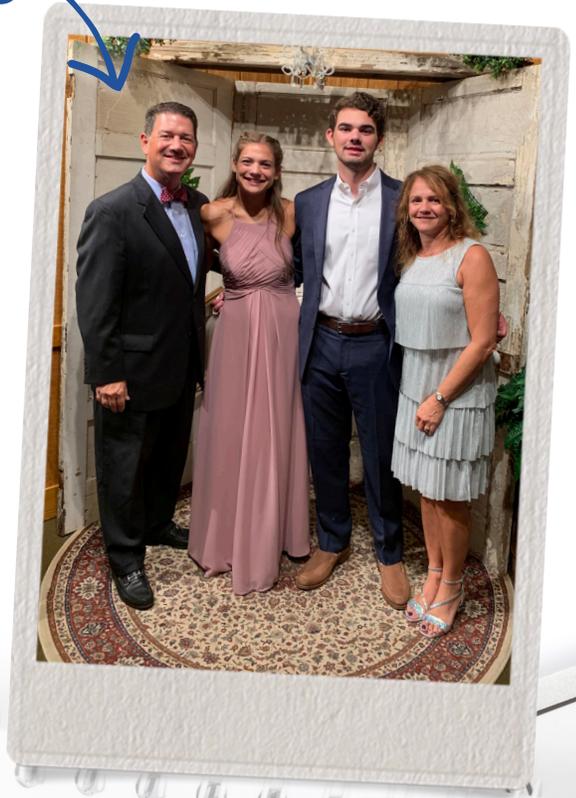
When I flew home from college for spring break with one suitcase, little did I know that I would be spending the next eight plus months with my family in North Carolina. Going from living an independent, busy lifestyle to being under the roof of my parents again has truthfully had its challenges at times. But the Lord continues to teach me how to be present in the moment and trust Him no matter where He has me. The friends I have met and opportunities I have had in this season—including the opportunity to stay at NC Family for an extra semester—never would have happened otherwise.

While before I could not wait to get out of my hometown, now I have come to appreciate its quirks and small-town feel. The long family walks outside in the beautiful weather were a special highlight of quarantine. Looking back on this season, I have realized what a gift it has been to watch firsthand how my family has navigated the many changes that this time has brought. We transitioned to a new church body. My mom entered the workforce again after 11 years. My brother started his senior year of high school. Although COVID indeed greatly changed *my* plans, I know that I needed to be with my family in this season as we walked through these changes together.

John, President & Executive Director

I have experienced two primary silver linings during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. One is the opportunity to have more focused time with my family. Although we have always loved spending time together, my daughter Amelia lives in Baltimore, and my son Jordan is at UNC-Chapel Hill. Due to COVID-19, Amelia was forced to work remotely. To break up the monotony of the day, we spent more time than usual chatting on the phone, FaceTiming, and sending each other goofy messages and gifs. She's also been home for a couple of extended visits, and that's been wonderful! When UNC-Chapel Hill sent students home, Jordan and I carved out more time to play golf and go fishing. Our golf improved, but not our fishing. Regardless, the activity was secondary to the delight of spending time with each other. As I look back on my youth, some of my fondest recollections are times I spent with my dad. I pray that Jordan has similar memories, and I thank God for the extra time.

The second silver lining also has to do with relationships. COVID also forced my church to cancel an annual short-term mission trip to Guatemala, and we were heartbroken. Not to be deterred, the incredible staff at Potter's House Association in Guatemala City invited ministry partners from across the U.S. to join them for a time of sharing and prayer each week. Those Thursday morning Zoom calls became one of the most anticipated parts of my schedule, and I feel so much closer to my brothers and sisters in Guatemala. It's amazing how technology can help bridge the divide otherwise caused by a global pandemic.





Eileen, Constituent Services

I have two “silver linings of COVID,” and they go hand-in-hand. They are time and thankfulness.

Before COVID, my days were lists of to-dos just waiting to be checked off. Work and home responsibilities, church service, family, phone calls, and on and on. Now, it’s more that I float from one thing to another, with time for reflection. That reflection has brought me great thankfulness.

I have lived in my townhome for 28 years, and in my busyness had hardly spent any time on my back deck. It overlooks a horse farm—just beautiful—and I never really appreciated it before. This year I had several meals on the deck with family and friends. I’ve had time to walk every day, with friends or alone, and I’m so thankful for that. I have a phone call with my sister every day and we talk for up to an hour. Whatever do we find to talk about? We talk about our day, our families, and reflect back to our parents. We never would have taken the time for this if it weren’t for COVID.

I love to curl up on my favorite chair with a coffee and my bible study. I just lose all sense of time until I am finished. I’m so thankful for that freedom.

Recently I received an email from my 46-year-old son thanking me for the way he had been raised. He’d had *time* to reflect on his life and was led to let me know how *thankful* he was. I guess I’m not the only one.

Heather, Administrator

Joy. Calm. Snuggles. Freedom. These are the words that come to mind when I think of the silver linings of COVID-19. Don’t get me wrong, there are plenty of other, less positive words to describe it as well! But, my fondest memories will be the unexpected moments granted to us by being forced to stay home.

While the days were long and very challenging, as we suddenly had to balance both parents working while “homeschooling” our 2nd and 4th graders, the evenings were gifts from God. Suddenly, we didn’t have to take our daughter to gymnastics three nights a week. Our son didn’t have to go to hockey three nights a week either. My part-time coaching job was closed. We had literally *nothing* to do.

So, we began making dinner every night and eating as a family, something we rarely had time for before. Seeing the kids excited to set the table and enjoy leisurely dinners together was joyous for me. We then played games together after dinner. We relaxed. We snuggled and watched movies. We became closer. It was the most calm I’ve been in a long time. In the end, we realized the importance of slowing down and found that sometimes being forced to stop can actually give you freedom.

