

Update: Coronavirus and Your Church (March 14, 2020)

It's been a week that has left our heads spinning. Headline after headline about the coronavirus. Schools closing. Events being cancelled.

- What's a Christian supposed to make of all this?
- What's a church supposed to do about all of this?
- What do you need to know before coming to church on Sunday?

BIBLE REMINDERS

First, Let the Word guide your response to coronavirus more than any other source. It is certainly good for us, as individuals and as a group, to stay informed. This helps guide us in making wise decisions. But instead of getting stressed by checking your newsfeed every few minutes, take moments regularly to be refreshed by God's Word to you. God has many great and precious promises for us.

- **God is in control.** Psalm 46:1 - "Be still, and know that I am God."
- **God loves us and promises to help us.** Isaiah 41:10 - "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
- **God promises to use all things for our good.** Romans 8:28 - "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- **God wants to use us to reflect his love to others.** Matthew 5:14, 16 "You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise their Father in heaven."

WORSHIP AT BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR

During times of fear and uncertainty, it is more important than ever for Christians to meet together for mutual encouragement and strengthening in God's Word. **We will continue to hold worship at 10:00 AM on Sundays with 11:15 AM Bible Hour. We will also continue our Wednesday evening worship at 6:30pm.**

That said, we will be taking precautionary steps at church to ensure the gatherings are as safe as possible.

- We will follow this CDC guidance on *What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus*: "Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting."
- CDC guidance includes to "limit food sharing." **We will cancel Wednesday evening potlucks.** As these potlucks aren't essential, we'll forgo them for the remainder of the Lenten season. **Note: Wednesday worship will continue to be held at 6:30pm.**
- **Sunday morning snacks will be limited to individually packaged items from the store.**
- Holy Communion will be celebrated this Sunday. The utmost care will be exercised. Pastor will sanitize his hands immediately prior to distribution.
- Please follow the same common-sense steps at church that you're being encouraged to follow in other areas of your life (wash your hands, don't touch your face, avoid close contact, stay home and keep your kids home if you or they are not feeling well.)

HEALTH OF MEMBERS

Christian love leads us to protect each other's bodies, respect each other's caution, ease each other's nervousness, and limit each other's fears. I don't want you to keep God's house at arm's length because you don't trust your fellow believers to do their due diligence.

- With that being said, we all need to use wisdom and love in the coming weeks regarding our church attendance. **If you are feeling sick (flu, cold, cough, runny nose, sneezing) please don't come to church! You**

should feel no guilt or shame staying home. You are loving your fellow believer by avoiding the spread of infection. That is what Christian love leads us to do.

- If you get sick (and not just from coronavirus), please let your pastor know so he can pray for you and provide pastoral care. This will also allow our leaders to make wise decisions about group gatherings at church. At this time, we are not aware that there is anyone in our community of believers who is sick with coronavirus.
- BUT when you are healthy, come to church and thank God with me for the health he alone gives. After you've washed your hands, come to church and be reminded that all your sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus, given to you in the cleansing power of Baptism. After hearing of the virus spread on the news all week, come to church to hear the good news that God is in control.

POTENTIAL FUTURE STEPS

Please, pay attention to your email, text, and our social media for updates. If the outbreak reaches the point where further steps are deemed to be unwise, we will take them.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please reach out to me and share. I'd love to hear them.

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