

March 14, 2020

Family and friends,

As I imagine to be the case for most people, I have been closely monitoring information on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as it relates to our community. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it to be a pandemic. At the time of this letter, there are 2,287 cases in the United States and 49 deaths. While the vast majority of resolved cases resulted in recovery (93%)¹, the threat of death for any portion of our population is frightening and warrants precautions for the well-being of our family and community.

Weekend Services

After much prayer and counsel, **we will continue to offer a weekend service** for those desiring to come until further notice. As of today, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in Brazoria County.² Officials from neighboring Harris and Montgomery Counties that have confirmed cases have recommended suspension of gatherings of 250 and greater. Our largest service is less than half of this amount. In addition to weighing the physical ramifications of service, I recognized the need of some to find reassurance and hope in their faith. The fear associated with our current circumstance can move people to despair without the assurance and hope found in the gospel. I do not want anyone to feel or interpret my decision to mean that failing to attend service is related to a lack of faith. To the contrary, I am **strongly recommending every person 60 and over to stay home** due to the higher risk for serious complications or death³, as well as **families of small children**. While there is relatively little risk for serious complications for younger people, children cannot be expected to be disciplined enough to follow practices to prevent the spread of bacteria.

What We are Doing

To limit the transmission of harmful bacteria, we have enacted the following practices:

- We will only gather for the 9 AM service for the time being.
- There will not be any KidLife activities.
- We have increased efforts to routinely sanitize surfaces, including door handles, light switches, and chairs.
- We have added space to our seating arrangement and will suspend the Meet and Greet portion of service (handshakes, hugs, & fist bumps are discouraged).
- Cash or check offerings will be deposited at the sanctuary doors at the end of service.
- We are acquiring equipment to stream our service in the next few weeks.

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

² <https://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/departments/health-department/phep/-fsiteid-1>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html#risk-assessment>

- Life Groups are suspended from meeting corporately until further notice. This does not apply to video or phone conferencing.

What You Need to Do

In regard to physical health, continue to engage the practices recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Follow public health advice** regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- **Stay informed.** CDC's [COVID-19 Situation Summary](#) will be updated regularly as information becomes available.⁴

In regard to your faith, be the salt and light God has called you to be:

Pray – Do not simply pray for healing and protection from infection, but pray for our civic leaders, our economy, our unity, your neighbors, and the resolution of this crisis. In addition to being a means by which God will manifest His mercy and grace, it is a great solution for anxiety (Philippians 4:4-7).

Give – We fully expect the church will be instrumental in helping people and the community recover from this pandemic. To do that, we will need your consistent financial support. You can set up recurring gifts [here](#). If you wish to mail donations, they can be sent to 8809 Broadway, Suite B, Pearland, TX 77584. In addition to financial gifts, you are encouraged to look out for the well-being of others. Supplies such as water, toilet paper, and sanitizing means are in short supply. If you have extra, consider what you can share to care for those with a higher risk or challenged by a lack of means to purchase their needs.

Share – Many of you will have extended time with family due to school closings and restrictions at work. Use this as an opportunity to have fun and facilitate faith in spiritual conversations. While you may or may not worship in a corporate setting with your church home, use this time to make your home a place of worship. In addition to your family, the frightful and frustrating circumstances of this virus presents a great opportunity to be a witness to the hope of Jesus Christ. The long lines at the grocery store is ample time to talk about eternal preparation.

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html>

We will continue to monitor this situation and will communicate any changes to you. Please use your personal judgment in making any decisions related to you and your family. If circumstances related to COVID-19 have put you in need or if you have questions about this correspondence, do not hesitate to contact me at cclemons@twolc.com.

In His love,

Chris Clemons

Pastor of The Way of Life Church