

Living Together in Days of Uncertainty  
*Acting with An Abundance of Caution*

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Let us be clear, these are uncertain days, which seem to demand that we care for ourselves and those around us with strong intent and greater diligence. As the COVID-19 Virus continues to spread, as the World Health Organization has now named it a Pandemic, and as we live with new fear and anxiety... let us do our best to remember the words of God when he encouraged people to “not be afraid.”

Let us hold steady by embracing the non-anxious presence of God. And let us act wisely. We are going to be taking these precautions as at least temporary measures to protect ourselves and each other. The length of implementation will be determined by the extent of the COVID-19 threat.

We will follow these protocols:

**CHURCH ACTIVITIES:** During the next two weeks, Monday, March 16 through Saturday, March 28, we will suspend all church activities except Sunday worship services. This will include the preschool, M&M’s, choir rehearsal, small group gatherings, youth and other programs, including those that meet off-campus. We are in touch with AA, scouting programs, Bell Socialization, etc. to inform them of this change. As we near the end of this period, we will re-evaluate as we look ahead.

**WORSHIP SERVICES:** At this time, all three services will continue at their regular times.

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE:** Our Congregational Care efforts will also change, to comply with current guidelines. Most residential and health care facilities are requesting that no non-essential persons enter their buildings in order to limit the spread and damage of the disease. In support, we will temporarily suspend all home, nursing facility and hospital visits, except in the case of life-threatening circumstances. We do, however, want to remain very involved in caring for our members in this difficult time. PLEASE DO continue to call or email the church office, or Kim Piper (717-873-8150) with health and other prayer concerns. We will reach out to these, and to our church family who are isolated, through phone, mail, etc.

**HYGIENE PRECAUTIONS TO BE OBSERVED**

- Greeting One Another – To reduce the spread of germs, let us dispense with shaking hands and hugging for now. Alternatives could be the popular fist bump... an elbow tap... a hand, held over the heart as you nod your head at the other... or the Japanese/Korean or Papal greeting, folding hands in a prayer position and bowing before one other.
- Offering baskets/plates – The practice at the 8:00 and 10:30 services will change during this period. Offering plates will not be passed in the pews. Rather, plates/baskets will be located at the front and rear of the sanctuary. Persons are invited to place their offering in the plates/baskets during the offertory, or before/after the service. The 8:30 service will continue with their normal practice.

- Ushers – Have been instructed to open doors and keep them open in order to minimize the knobs and handles being pushed by multiple people.
- Holy Communion – Those preparing communion will use latex gloves. For now, at the 8:30 service, we will not be using the intinction method of serving communion. All bread will be pre-cut, and all unfermented wine will be served in the small cups. Servers, as necessary, will use latex gloves to offer the elements of the bread and cup, to minimize handling.
- Hand sanitizer – While we encourage hand washing in the restrooms, hand sanitizer can be found throughout our buildings and will be available as long as we can maintain a supply.
- Rest Rooms - When you are finished with hand washing, please use your towel to push any door that may be handled, before you dispose of it. It would also be helpful to turn off all faucets using a towel.
- Cleaning at Bethlehem –During this season of caution, we are using our strongest disinfectant liquid in all areas of the building.
- Pew materials - You may want to refrain from using hymnals, pens, the attendance pad, etc. for the time being. (Though many of you sit in the same place weekly). You may sing by using the words projected on the screens.

#### COMMON SENSE PRACTICES

- Wash... Wash... Wash your hands. Overdo it! Sing verse 1 of “Amazing Grace” as you lather up.
- Be especially careful around our senior members!
- When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on please protect others by covering your mouth!
- Be attentive to your tissues! When used, dispose of them immediately. Do not let them lie about!
- When you are ill, please stay home!
- When you are ill with clear flu symptoms in these uncertain times, call or see your doctor!

#### AS A LAST WORD...

It is our hope that you will see these protocols as a means by which we are protecting those who are part of our church family and anyone who uses the building from the consequences of this pandemic. Again, we do not want to be in full panic mode on these matters, but we do want to proceed with appropriate caution. As always, we thank you for your cooperation. Let us continue our resolve to pray for science and medical professionals as they guide us now and in the future.

*Do not be afraid... but be wise indeed.*