

Your Church and the COVID-19 Threat

These are anxious times. I was speaking with one of our older members recently, and she said she hasn't seen anything like this since she was a little girl and whooping cough was the threat. The COVID-19 virus continues to spread. The financial markets have dropped precipitously. Schools and businesses have closed. Major sports events have been cancelled.

Obviously we are making changes at church too. We are trying to be proactive. Please know that our church is not closed. You are welcome here, as always, and you will receive love but no handshakes or hugs. Here are some other things you need to know.

- The custodial staff has been vigilant in cleaning and disinfecting all areas of the church. We have suspended the use of our facility by outside groups. The sanctuary received a deep cleaning yesterday. The bathrooms are scheduled for today. Every square inch is being cleaned.
- The church web page will have up to date information about changes and opportunities. The address is www.Weatherly.org. New prayer needs will be distributed through our Egroup email. If you are not on the Egroup distribution list, we will gladly add you. All we need is your email address.
- We hope to have live streaming communication available soon. Handy and I plan to offer a prayer time and brief Bible study Wednesday at 4 p.m. We will send you step-by-step directions for how to participate.
- Workload is obviously diminished for some of our church staff during this time, so they will be allowed to take annual leave or leave without pay. Office hours will be temporarily adjusted to 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can always reach our ministers on their cellphones.
- We are checking on church members who may need help with shopping or other essential needs.
- I encourage Sunday School classes and other groups to find ways to stay in touch. Be alert to those who may have special needs.
- Please do not neglect your tithes and offerings. You may drop them off here at the church or mail them. The mail will be checked daily. You may also use your bank's bill pay option or hold your offerings until we are able to gather again.

While we are taking this threat seriously, we are choosing not to panic. We are facing this time as people of faith and hope. We are abiding by the recommendations of the medical and scientific communities (hand washing, social distancing, etc.). And we are praying for you and one another.

Last week one of the devotions in our Lenten devotional guide was titled "Not Anxious." It was based on this passage from Jeremiah 17:

*Blessed are those who trust in the Lord...
They shall be like a tree planted by water...
In the year of drought it is not anxious...*

Our trust is in the Lord. As a community of faith, we choose to affirm our confidence in the love and care of God. Be smart about your activities. Keep a safe distance from other. Wash your hands frequently. And we will gather again soon.

With bonds of love,
David