

## WHBC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Dear members and friends of Washington Heights Church.

*"Comfort each other and edify one another."*  
1 Thessalonians 5:11

These words of scripture are an anchor for my thinking when, minute by minute, we are tossed about with sometimes confusing reports and conflicting orders about the coronavirus pandemic. I am so thankful that we are the people of God. In Christ, we have the opportunity to experience great comfort and offer great strength during this period of crisis.

We know that Christians are not immune to the coronavirus or COVID-19. But that does not mean we should react by isolating ourselves or by allowing the fear of contracting the disease to control us. We know that our faith should give us help in this time of need, and yet, sometimes, we struggle to find that help when the chaos is tumbling down around us. The simple question is, **"How should a Christian respond?"**

Please allow me to share several simple truths that I have found encouraging. Some of these are from my own heart and study. Others have been gleaned while reviewing what the myriad responses that have been posted since this outbreak began. Wherever sourced, I have found, a used this to be healthy food from my hungry soul.

**1. Remember that this is not a surprise to God.**

As believers we take great comfort from the knowledge that even this calamity happens under the watchful care of our sovereign God. That does not mean that it will be easy but it means that we are assured it does not happen without weaving its way into his greater purpose. And so we look to respond by faith even in these difficult times.

**2. Rely on God's grace, strength and peace as we respond to these difficult times.**

God promised Asher that he would have the *"strength equal to his days."* (Deuteronomy 33:25) And Paul put so much into perspective when he reminded us that God's *"strength is made perfect in (our) weakness."* (2 Corinthians 12:9). We can't try to control tomorrow. But we can do today what we can, and then be content we have done all that God has asked of us.

**3. Pray, Pray, Pray!**

As Dr. Billy Graham often said, *"Prayer is the Christians greatest weapon."* Unfortunately, we get so busy fixing the problem ourselves, we forget to simply ask our Father, who already has the situation well in hand, what He wants us to do. James put it simply, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."* (James 1:5)

**4. Immerse yourself in God's word.**

Proverbs 30:5 says it so well; *"Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to those who take refuge in him."* When I'm listening to the constant reports it is easy to let anxiety and fear take control. But when I meditate on God's Word, I feed the Spirit with truth that brings order and comfort to my soul.

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**5. Use the wisdom and gifts God has given you.**

I love Proverbs 15:22, *"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed."* This simply means use some common sense! Exercise the proactive personal hygiene that we know to do. Take the advice of the skilled people God has brought into our lives and "Just Do It!"

**6. Care for others even as we care for ourselves.**

What an opportunity to exercise God's great commandment. "Love the Lord your God... and love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)

**7. See this outbreak as a spiritual opportunity and not a physical crisis.**

As Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!" (John 6:68)  
That's what we have to offer a world caught in fear; The words of Life! It's hard in the moment, when we are struggling with the safety of our family and friends, to remember that this world is not our home and this life is not our real life. Our real life is our life with Christ. Our real life is a life eternal. And, what better time to show the hope of that eternal life to a hurting world than when they are searching so desperately for hope in the face of this crisis?



Lead Pastor, David Kisner

## WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR OUR CHURCH AND ITS PROGRAMS?

Regarding this coming Sunday, we will have a restructured service for those who desire to join us in worship and are able to attend. We don't expect that everyone will be here. But we also recognize that the opportunity to worship, pray, and draw strength from the Body of Christ is essential to a healthy Christian life. Grocery stores remain open and people visit them as needed. The same is true for restaurants, and airports, and many workplaces. Just as a weekly trip to the grocery store will sustain the body, we believe many will find a weekly trip to worship feeds the soul.

But please... evaluate your personal risk factors and come to worship only if you are comfortable. Specifically, we ask anyone with an underlying health concern, a compromised immune system or seniors to carefully measure any decision to venture out. And if you are sick – at all! – please stay home until this crisis passes. Finally, let me say again, there is no guilt for those who decide not to attend services, only an opportunity for those who wish to worship.

## PROGRAM CHANGES

Both morning and evening services will be available for those who wish to come together for encouragement, prayer and worship. This Sunday's schedule is as follows:

**9:00a** All ABFs and youth with meet (see map for room location).

**10:30a** Worship Service

***\*JAM City programs will be available for birth thru 6<sup>th</sup> grade during both the 9:00a and 10:30a services.***

**6:00p** Sunday Evening Service

### **ABF Room Locations (9:00a)**

**150** – Ambassadors

**151** – Journey

**152** – Co-Laborers

**Conference Room** – Pathfinders

**Dining Room** - Bereans

**251** – HomeBuilders

**250** – Disciples

**252** – Vision

**Sports Office** - Newly Marrieds

For sanitary reasons, no food will be brought into ABFs or classrooms and coffee will not be offered. Feel free to bring your own coffee.

If you are a volunteer supporting one of our Sunday ministries, please contact your ministry leader immediately, with your plans for this Sunday.

Ministry leaders will be contacting their individuals groups to communicate changes to other scheduled events.

## **GENERAL RESPONSE**

We ask that everyone make wise decisions for the health and safety of their families. We encourage you to fellowship with us, but also feel no guilt for choosing to stay home at this time. Please refer to the guidelines provided by the CDC in preventing the spread of any illness:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay at home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, and going to the restroom, and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can (and wash hands).
- Forego shaking hands and use a friendly smile, verbal greeting, or wave instead.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.