



Broadus Memorial Baptist Church
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March 17, 2020

Dear Family and Friends of the Pole Green and Hebron Campuses,

COVID-19

I dare say we will all remember 2020 as the year of the coronavirus. What strange days these are! If you are like me, at one moment you feel like all the cancellations, bans and restrictions are an over-reaction. After all, most of us don't know anyone who has tested positive – or even had cause to be tested. But then when you listen to the Center for Disease Control, or look at the trajectory of the disease in some other countries, you begin to realize that we are still in the early stages of a highly contagious and deadly epidemic. **This is not to be taken lightly.**

SELF-CARE

Let me urge all of you to take the **common sense steps** for protecting yourself, your family, and the community. You've all heard this before, but here is my reminder:

- Wash your hands thoroughly (at least 20 seconds) with soap and warm water. Do it whenever you can. Use hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol between times. Even then, try not to touch your face any more than you have to.
- Practice "social distancing." Avoid groups of people, and keep a distance of several feet from others when possible. Use a smile and a wave rather than handshakes and hugs. Make a phone call rather than a visit. Needless to say, don't share food or drink.
- If you must cough or sneeze, do it into a disposable tissue – or at least into your elbow. Simply try not to spray droplets into the air. And stay away from those who are.
- Spend some time disinfecting handles, railings and other hard surfaces – even at home.
- If you are feeling sick, stay home – particularly if it involves coughing, fever and/or difficulty breathing! If your symptoms worsen, call your doctor before going to their office. They may advise you to stay home, or your doctor may want you to get tested. If you must go out, wear a mask to protect others. Be diligent about staying "self-quarantined" if that is recommended.
- Take special care if you are over 65. The elderly and people with compromised health are particularly vulnerable. Don't let pride get the best of you. Be careful!

CHURCH RESPONSE

With that in mind, let me tell you what the church is doing. With the guidance of our healthcare professionals, we are following the recommendations of the CDC and state government. Beginning this past Sunday, we have **suspended all activities**. This includes worship services, Bible studies, dinners, class parties, and even most committee meetings. We will only host small gatherings of necessary personnel, like the staff. I regret the necessity of this extreme action, but the church leadership and I feel it is our duty to protect the health and welfare of as many as possible. If schools, businesses and sports leagues can do it, so can we. This will continue through Friday, March 27, but we expect it will probably be extended. How long? We do not know. We will try to keep the church website updated.

While the ban on gathering is in effect, we will be operating on **abbreviated office hours**. Someone will be here to answer the phone from **8:30-noon, Monday through Thursday**. At other times, you may need to reach staff on their cell phones. Mine is 221-7096, and Jeff Poythress' is 314-2946. Most of you have a support network in place, but please know that **if you need us, we are here for you**. Both the staff and healthy volunteers are willing to go to the grocery store or pharmacy for you, and then drop supplies at your home. You are not alone in this! Let us help. You can also let us know if you are facing a particular financial hardship. The church will help as it is able.

Even though the virus dies out on surfaces after a few days, our custodian Buddy will be spending the week doing a **thorough cleaning** of the touchable surfaces in the church. We do this even though most of you will have no reason to be here in the next couple of weeks. When you do come back, the place will be clean and ready!

SERMONS AND BIBLE STUDIES

Another way the church is responding is by putting **Sunday morning sermons online**. On our website, www.BroadusChurch.org, you can find the link for the video. I'm trying to finish up the *Promised Land Living* series that Pastor Jeff and I have been preaching since January. We will wrap it up this coming Sunday with "*Be Strong & Courageous*," which is a great topic for this particular season and situation. We will keep posting the sermons online even after we start gathering for worship again.

Something else I'm working on is a simple **Daily Bible Study Guide**. Since Holy Week and Easter are right around the corner, I thought it would be nice for us to reflect on the "*Rough Road to the Resurrection*." We will look primarily at the week leading up to the resurrection. I'll give you a few verses to read and a few thoughts to consider in each day's lesson. I pray this will be enriching for all of us, keeping us connected to one another as we also reflect on Jesus' sacrifice – and his victory! The 24 daily readings are designed to begin on Friday, March 20th and end on Easter Sunday. They will be posted on the website this week. Contact the office if you want a paper copy mailed to you.

Speaking of Easter, the staff is working on how we can best celebrate this hallmark of our faith while still following the safety guidelines prescribed for us. We hope the gathering ban will not be too restrictive, allowing us to employ some creativity for a meaningful observance of Resurrection Sunday without endangering anyone. We will get the details out to you as soon as we can.

STEWARDSHIP

Many of you are very faithful in your giving whatever the circumstances, but I just want to give this reminder that even when we are unable to meet together, the expenses of the church march on. We will continue to support our missionaries, pay our utilities, and employ our staff. In fact, at times like this we are likely to spend more money than usual in order to minister to hurting people. Our offerings to the Lord allow us to do this. I would urge you to **continue your faithful stewardship**. You can send offerings to the office, save up for your first Sunday back, set up an automatic draft from your bank, or use our online giving tools. Look for the link on the website.

FAITH IS THE VICTORY!

One thing we know for certain in this time of uncertainty is that **God is in control!** In the coming days, we are all likely to know someone who has contracted COVID-19, and we may even know someone who passes away from the disease. That is part of this fallen world in which we live. But God has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. Nothing can separate us from His love, and nothing can undermine His plan for our eternal and abundant life.

Therefore, do not live in fear! During these strange days, pray for God's protection, and that He will use us as His witnesses to the world. The Apostle Paul said, "***For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind***" (2 Timothy 1:7 KJV). Let God's power and peace be evident in your life as you pour out His love on those around you. The decision of what we do and how we do it will be made with the wisdom that comes from a sound mind, not as a reaction to fear. Remember, viruses are temporary, but God's love is eternal.

Take care, and be strong in the Lord!

Phil Peacock, Pastor

If you received this letter by "snail-mail" but would like to receive future notifications - including the monthly newsletter - by email, please contact the office or email me at phil@broadusmbc.org. The church saves money with electronic correspondence. We also encourage you to check out the church website or follow us on Facebook.