

PLANNING FOR THE CORONAVIRUS

Church Family,

Since there are growing concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), we want to let you know how First Covenant Church is responding.

In light of the growing concerns and uncertainties regarding the coronavirus pandemic, we recognize our calling to respond faithfully in ways that protect the most vulnerable among us. **Therefore, have decided to worship online until further notice.** We will monitor and assess the situation next week and will communicate any future cancellations. We are facing a situation that invites us to both trust in God and respond thoughtfully. We believe our decision to conduct worship online, is a faithful expression of our love for one another.

Since we will not be meeting together this Sunday, we encourage you to [worship online with us](#) at 9:30am. Continue to faithfully give financially [online here](#) or by mail so that the ministry of the church thrives all the more in the midst of difficult days.

As we make our own plans, we encourage you to heed [the advice of the CDC](#), the [Douglas County Health Department](#), and US State Departments' travel watches, alerts, and warnings, and to take common-sense precautions in daily life.

HOW CAN I SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

One of the best ways to help us love our community during the spread of illness is simply to be a good neighbor. If you live beside or are in close contact with families who have high-risk individuals in their homes, reach out to see if they need anything. Simply look for ways that you can be salt and light in the coming weeks and commit to praying for our community and leaders.

Another great way to help your neighbors is [practicing common-sense health routines yourself](#). Wash your hands regularly, use hand sanitizer after you touch shared surfaces, and stay home if you're sick.

HOW CAN I BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes respiratory illness — an infection of the airways and lungs. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus. It is part of the same family of coronaviruses that includes the common cold. The coronavirus outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Since then, the virus has spread to other countries.

The most common early symptoms appear between 2 and 14 days after infection. Symptoms can be mild to severe. They include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention. Most people recover from the disease without needing special treatment.

Like many other viruses, the coronavirus (COVID-19) seems to spread from person-to-person through a cough, sneeze, or kiss. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the risk in the U.S. is still low. They will update this status regularly on their website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus). You can also find more information from the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int).

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND SPIRITUALLY TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is another reminder that we live in a fallen world of sickness, sin, suffering, and death.

Ultimately, none of us are immune to any of these things. But that's why the gospel is such good news. God has not left us alone in this world of sickness, sin, suffering, and death. He has come to us in the person of Jesus. The greatest news in all the world is that Jesus lived a life with no sin, died on a cross to pay the price for our sin, and rose from the grave in victory over sin and death. Now anyone anywhere who turns from their sin and trusts in Jesus will be forgiven of all their sin and restored to relationship with God forever. That means that through Jesus, we never have to fear sickness or death because we know we have eternal life with God.

In addition to trusting Jesus and sharing about Jesus with others, here are some other ways you can respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Trust in God. He is good and sovereign. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life upon whom we all depend.
- Pray for mercy for the sick, strength for doctors, insight for researchers, and wisdom for officials.
- Look for opportunities to love and care for others, whether they are sick, isolated, marginalized, poor, or oppressed.
- Avoid every semblance of prejudice or racism. In light of the origination of this virus in Asia, it has been grievous to see a rise in racist incidents against the Asian community.
- Reflect often on the brevity of life, the urgency of eternity, and the beauty of the gospel.

Let's continue to be the Church and walk with God together in the days ahead. We will keep you updated should our schedules and plans change in the coming weeks.

The Lead Team of First Covenant Church