



Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is on everybody's mind. A lot of useful articles have been written dealing with the ramifications of this potential global pandemic. I would encourage you to follow the suggestions of the CDC for helping prevent the spread of the virus. Here is a useful link to their site:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

Another useful link:

<https://factsandtrends.net/2020/02/27/is-your-church-ready-for-the-coronavirus/>

Be wise and take precautions so as not to further spread this virus if it becomes an issue in your community. Encourage your members to practice healthy habits. If they are not feeling well, have a cough, or feel flu-like symptoms then please encourage them to stay home.

For Holy Communion we encourage the washing of hands and/or the use of hand sanitizers prior to distribution and following distribution. Consider putting small bottles of hand sanitizer in each pew.

As you greet one another or exchange greetings during the sharing of peace, consider a simple head bow, a wave, or an elbow knock.

It is also a good thing to ask those who are maintaining the facilities to be extra diligent in disinfecting surfaces and door handles.

If the spread of this virus continues, your church and school need to plan for contingencies. Among them are:

- 1) How can you minister to the vulnerable members of your community? How might you serve/assist them during this time? Do you have a list of those more vulnerable in your church and a plan to check on them?
- 2) If you had to quarantine for a period of time, how might you continue to serve your congregation with God's Word? A useful tool might be "Facebook Live" in order to lead short devotions/times of worship. It's free and simple to use. It might be time to get familiar with this or any other method you can use to bring the hope and comfort of the Gospel to your people.
- 3) If it should become necessary to close your building, what is your capacity for continuing to do ministry and handle the everyday business and finances of your church? If you have a plan in place, now is a good time to review it. If not, use this opportunity to gather with two or three leaders and develop one. Consider what will happen with the mail, how banking needs will be covered, and how you will manage vendors and payroll.

It is prudent to have a plan. In the midst of all of this, remember the promises of our God. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46)

In Christ,

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