

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

This page will remain updated with the latest announcements about COVID-19 and Covenant Life Church. As this is a fluid situation, please check back in regularly for the latest updates.

MARCH 18, 10:30 A.M. UPDATE

Beloved church family,

I pray that you were able to join us on the live-stream of our service this past Sunday. I recently heard [Greg Gilbert](#), pastor of Third Avenue Baptist Church, say that one of the ways he believes God can, and will, use this pandemic is to stir afresh within each of us great joy and desire to gather together as a church family. Gilbert continued, "There are a lot of Christians across the world for whom watching a service on a television screen isn't strange or sad at all. It is strange and it is sad for us; it is not normal for us...Because however many weeks we are in this situation, we want you longing to come back to this place, longing to feel the rumble of a few hundred people singing with the walls reverberating with that sound. We want you longing to see and embrace your brothers and sisters as we hear God's word, read God's word, and worship God together."

I agree with Gilbert here. As thankful as I was that we were able to make live-stream accommodations, and as hopeful as I am that we can continue, this past Sunday was a far cry from the soul-stirring, heart-warming gathering rhythms of our church family. In all that has been and will be lost due to this virus, may the longing to gather together only intensify. To be clear, while it certainly wasn't ideal, it was a joy seeing so many of you participating with us in singing, praying, and sitting under God's word. Thank you for being with one another as best we could.

What is to come?

As new information continues to unfold and government officials seek to further prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are faced yet again with difficult decisions as it relates to our church life together. For the reasons we stated in our last email, we believe that it is best to cancel the following activities.

1. **Our Sunday gathering this week, as well as all other Sunday activities.**
We are making plans to [live-stream our service](#) with some improvements to

enhance the audio and visual quality. We will begin our live-stream a bit sooner hoping to help those who experience technical difficulties or need a bit more time to get set up. If James 1:1-4 was timely, we believe that this week's text (1:5-8) is equally needed as we seek the wisdom that we don't have to navigate days that are unfamiliar to us.

2. **The remainder of CLI and Foundations for this semester.** We are thankful for those who have prepared and taught us as well as for those who have made it a priority to attend.
3. **Our special Members' Meeting scheduled for Sunday, March 22** concerning the church building process, particularly the topic of debt, has been postponed to a later date.
4. **Our student ministry gatherings.**
5. **The family camp-out this weekend.**
6. Finally, I am disheartened to announce that we are **postponing our 10-year celebration of God's faithfulness and grace to CLC (April 24-26)**. Be on the lookout for future plans to celebrate God's kindness to us as a church family. Help us pass the word that this has been postponed.

How then shall we live?

As we have stated in previous correspondence, these unique days provide us with unique opportunities in displaying our love for God, love for one another, and love for neighbor. Here are a few reminders to consider.

1. If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, please [adhere to the recommended protocols](#) and inform the elders.
2. If you are in need of help, we want to know what your needs are. [Please email us with basic information about your need](#). We are putting together a response team that will seek to help us practically meet needs for one another. A few areas of need that come to mind: yard work, housework, errands, doctor appointments, grocery pick up and delivery, financial assistance, job loss, childcare help, etc.
3. If you have the margin to help others, [please reply here and detail your availability](#). While we know that every member would be willing to help, we are looking for those who have greater than normal availability or unique skills to help others.
4. As we consider how to move towards one-another (with social-distancing in mind), we want to ensure that every member feels the freedom to voice their preferences as it pertains to giving or receiving help. For example, if you have a newborn and have been receiving meals from others, but are now uncomfortable with someone bringing over food, please feel the freedom to make that known. If you are being asked by others how they can help you, and you would prefer to not receive help that may compromise health measures you've established, feel free to communicate that. Let's not

merely think about how we would like to help, *but let's consider the one receiving the help and hold their preferences in higher regard than our own.*

5. Creatively think of ways to connect with other church members. Utilize the church directory as a prayer guide and make it a point to reach out to one person every 1-2 days with a note of encouragement, a phone call, and/or a prayer. Prioritize phone calls and video capabilities to connect with one another. Texts are easy but there is something much more personal and life-giving in a voice to voice or face to face interaction, even if over a technological medium. We are thinking through online options for hosting CG meetings and corporate prayer times in the weeks ahead.
6. Families, leverage this time to make memories together. Work to ensure that your speech is along the lines of Ephesians 4:29 so as to protect the worldview of children in your homes. It would be easy to complain during these days, so teach children that when days are difficult it is acceptable to grumble and complain. May our children watch their parents bring their requests to God and hear of the opportunities this time affords, not the inconveniences. Pray together, do projects that have others in mind, and enjoy one another's presence. Families, remember our single brothers and sisters, as well as those who are older, who are being affected in different ways that you are. Look for ways to connect and check-in with those who could easily feel alone during these times.
7. Two encouragements regarding our temporary suspension of Sunday morning gatherings...
 1. Parents, but dads in-particular — set the tone for family worship. Set up the live-stream of the service on a big screen or in another prominent way. Sing loudly, take notes, bring some excitement, and start planning early. May Sundays continue to be memorable for us and our children.
 2. Continue to faithfully give. Not only will this help the ministries of CLC move forward in the days ahead, but it will continue to keep your heart from becoming close-fisted to that which God has entrusted to you. Giving faithfully will help serve our hearts to not trust in the wrong things during these days. There are multiple options to consider to help you give easily. If you have questions about how to give during this time, contact Bob Walker.
8. Single brothers and sisters, leverage this time to draw near to God and creatively to others. Remember the elderly and families who've been uniquely affected by these precautions, and extend grace if their check-ins are not as frequent as you had hoped for. Look for ways to bless them with your prayers, encouragements, and your efforts to reach out to them.
9. Let's not only look within but also think about your spheres of influence and identify those who may be overlooked or in need during these days. Opportunities are all around us as we seek to do good to our neighbors and those particularly affected by this situation. There are church members who are willing and ready to be deployed to come alongside you in your

attempts to love neighbors, coworkers, and family members. In our interactions with others, let's be quick to ask for prayer requests, faithful to pray, and diligent to follow up in subsequent days. We trust there are ample opportunities to speak of Jesus in these days. May we prayerfully look to make the most of them.

10. Don't neglect to let Jesus dazzle you day by day. Prioritize time with God in and through His word. I've heard several people say, "I have more time now to slow down and do things that I haven't had the margin to do lately," May we not waste the opportunities to draw nearer to our God. This will be the lifeline for every other encouragement in this letter.

There are a host of other things to consider, but let's prayerfully digest and apply these together. You are prayed for. You are loved. Worship well this week and let's be grateful for the world-wide reminder that this world is not our home. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

By Christ's wounds and for His glory,

Justin (on behalf of the elders)