



Hello Creekwood,

I hope those of you who are still on Spring Break are enjoying your time. You're getting this e-mail from I-45 as we're on our way back from a nice trip to Galveston (*can we get an amen for mobile hotspots?*). I'm sure many of you have also received the news that your children and grandchildren are going to get another unexpected week of spring break, as the majority of school districts in our area are closing for at least another week as a "social distancing" precautionary measure to help curb the rapid expansion of the virus known as Covid-19, which has popped up in Dallas, Tarrant, and Collin counties.

The staff at Creekwood has been keeping a vigilant eye on developments around the area and had already been making several necessary precautionary decisions. ***Given new information we have also decided, at our Bishop's and the City of Allen's urging, to be good neighbors in the public health arena and cancel worship services for this Sunday, March 15th, along with all Sunday morning, evening, and weekly activities/groups.*** We will evaluate on Monday morning what the rest of the month looks like, but for now we are collaborating with school districts and other large gatherings to help "flatten the arc."

[\(Read the Bishop's words here\)](#)

We WILL have an online, live-streamed worship opportunity at 9:45 a.m. this Sunday with a bare bones staff. It will be streamed at our Creekwood United Methodist Church Facebook Page, but then will be recorded and posted on our website for viewing at your convenience. This worship will include a moment for children, a sermon, a time of prayer, and perhaps some other elements. We're still working on what this looks like, but I promise we will make it as meaningful as possible. Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us to provoke one another to good deeds and not neglect to meet with one another, so Pastor Keri Lynn will be helping to create conversation in the comments section below the live feed. It might not be in person, but at least we can be connected in love and hope in the midst of isolation. We'll also work on posting music and useful studies/resources throughout the week, and you'll continue to get our Lenten devotional e-mails each day as well.

Please share this information with anyone you feel might not read this in time. We are in contact with County and City officials who are giving us the updated and good information and suggestions, and we will pass pertinent information along via e-mail or a special section of our website. You can also get information at these sites:

- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [State Department of Health](#)
- [Collin County Department of Health](#)

I realize that, as Christians, we aren't to give into fear but we're also called to be good neighbors. Covid-19 is not likely to be a fatal virus for the majority of us, but for those over 80, over 60, and those with compromised immune systems it has proven to be more so. You might not be as "at-risk" but if you carry it to someone else, they might be. History and current science suggests strongly that the way to defeat an epidemic is to deny the virus future hosts, and best public health practices call for precaution so as to not overwhelm the health care system. I have been in contact with doctors and nurses that I know around the area, state, and country who are already feeling the strain.

While we might seem overwhelmed, here are things that The Body of Christ can and should do to lead our community:

1) Don't Panic

I can't stress this enough. Fear is the worst enemy of humanity and it causes us to do stupid things and forward/post terrible information on social media or via e-mail. I would say, also, don't be the person on the opposite side that tries to act braver than everyone else. I would expect us to respect the scientific community.

And a similarly related note, don't politicize this. It is part of panic and fear to find someone to blame. Let's do the best with what we've got right now and focus on healing people before we get down to the nitty-gritty of figuring out how we could have done this better.

We are people of God, and we trust that God's wisdom will prevail through our public health experts, health care professionals, prayer warriors, and compassionate community servants.

2) Keep Contact

If you are someone over 60 or with a compromised immune system, we have people willing to either shop for you or help you learn how to use online grocery order. Please do not be shy about your needs. Contact Keri Lynn Lucas or Deb Merrill with any needs you might have and we will determine the best way we can assist you.

We would also like to partner with those who are 60+ to make sure everyone is getting checked on. We will be working on a system this week, but if you're in need, please e-mail.

3) Call or Text for Prayer

Isolation can be hard. If you need someone to talk to, please call or text someone to make a meaningful connection. Use FaceTime to see another face. If you're in need of prayer, please use our prayer request site and we'll be happy to make contact with you as soon as we can.

Remember, this also goes both ways. Don't just reach out if you're feeling lonely, make sure you reach out to those in your sphere of influence to check on them.

4) Give Online

We will still be paying our staff, musicians, etc. during this temporary hiatus. There are bound to be economic implications as a result of the precautions in the world, and we don't want to be a part of causing anyone hurt. Since we will be missing at least a Sunday's offering please consider giving online generously as you would in worship. You can give at www.creekwoodumc.org/give. Or you can use your banking app to send a check to [261 Country Club Rd., Allen, TX 75002](#).

5) Use this as an opportunity for Sabbath

Go in the backyard and throw the football, start a new show on Netflix, play family games, learn a new recipe, read all 4 Gospels, etc. Sure, it could be a downer to miss March Madness or have your kids bouncing off the walls, but try to let The Spirit be your guide and seize the day in a healthy way!

6) Share

If you hoarded supplies and know of a neighbor in need don't respond in fear, respond in love and generosity...like Jesus would. Share your toilet paper, water, or whatever other item you bought a ton of that doesn't relate at all to Covid-19. Again, don't let fear and panic win the day. Hoarding is fear and panic at its best.

7) Wash Your Hands

I really don't feel I need to elaborate on this. However, I will be calling out you and your kids when I see you leave the men's bathroom from now on without as much as a baptismal sprinkle on your hands.

8) Pray

This probably should have been first, but prayer is both calming and it works. Pray for the world, your neighbors, and yourself. In fact, it takes about 20

seconds to pray The Lord's Prayer, so why not kill germs and ask God's guidance and wisdom in the same 20 second period?

I will certainly miss being with you in person on Sunday morning, but I do not expect to be absent from you. As we are connected in The Spirit, may we pray for each other, chat with each other, and find new ways to be the confident church of Jesus Christ's glory in the midst of uncertain times. I'll be in contact again early next week to update on Creekwood's plans going forward as we seek to be good neighbors.

Peace,
David Lessner