

March 12, 2020

Dear West Church Family,

With all the new cases of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the state of emergency in Massachusetts, it's important for us to consider how we as a church community hope to respond. From the start, I want to encourage our congregation to do the following:

A) Don't Panic but Be Aware

Accurate information is our friend. Will this continue to spread? Yes. Could it subside as vaccines are created and produced? Yes. Only God knows the answers to these questions. We should seek to learn as much as possible—so that we might spread the best information. Take the time to learn so that we might love our neighbors in truth and not in fear. Here are some resources to help:

YouTube

- Health Care Triage — [Video 1](#) | [Video 2](#)
- World Health Organization — [Video 1](#)

Websites:

- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

B) Take Care of Your Personal Health

Each of the above websites explains how we can resist the spread of the coronavirus. In particular: **take care of your personal hygiene**, especially by **washing your hands**. One insurance company recommends these steps this way:

Remember to take everyday preventive actions that are always recommended to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- *Avoid close contact with sick people.*
- *While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible. Stay home if you are sick.*
- *Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.*
- *Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.*
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.*

C) Sunday Morning Services & Special Days

How might this impact our services? We are going to respond appropriately to the expectations of our community leaders. We always work hard to make sure our facilities are clean and sanitary. We will not respond in panic but will apply wise caution as public health questions are being answered.

- **Parents:** Please, use wisdom on bringing your kids to our Children's Ministry programs, if they are sick.
- **All who attend any church event:** We love and respect each other here at West Church. Please ask permission to greet one another by shaking hands, embracing or kissing one another. If someone says no or refuses to respond, we will respect that.
- **Our Facilities:** We are committed to keeping our facilities clean and sanitary. We have hand sanitizer in the lobby as supplies last. Please, cover your mouth if you sneeze or cough.
- **If you feel ill:** Please, let us know so that we can pray for you and support you in any ways necessary. Also, feel free to listen to our sermons on our website ([link here](#)).

Understand that some of the risk factors can be reduced; other risk factors cannot be controlled. But if we do our part to ensure our personal hygiene, we will be caring for ourselves as well as our neighbor.

C) Pray and Be Looking for Ways to Help

Under Jesus' moment-to-moment direction, we should always be looking for ways to participate in helping those who are suffering. We start with **prayer**. We can pray for anything as we trust Him with everything.

Also, as our community gets sick, there will be opportunities to care for our neighbors in ways we wouldn't have been able to do before. Look for those ways that you can *uniquely and individually step into the lives of your community to serve in the name of Jesus*. In a time where people are afraid of every little sneeze and snuffle, while taking care of your own personal hygiene and health, look for ways to love your neighbors. *You* might be one of the ways that God works *all things for good* in the lives of those who are suffering.

If you find yourself sick, myself and Pastor Rick are always ready to come and pray with you in person. "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7. We walk by faith and not by sight. Children are taught to sing "He's got the whole world in His hand." This includes all of our West Church family as well as a world dealing with the reality of the Coronavirus.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Bill & Pastor Rick