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## A CONCISE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In light of the recent outbreak of COVID-19, we want to keep you informed and full of faith. So, we put together this concise response. We are Christians, and therefore not to be filled with fear, remembering always how “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18) and death has no sting (1 Cor. 15:55).

### FAST FACTS ON COVID-19

1. COVID-19 was first detected in China, and has now been detected in almost 70 locations internationally, including in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
2. Some see this virus becoming a pandemic,<sup>2</sup> but much remains unknown, with fatality totals are running much lower than for the seasonal flu (which has killed at least 18,000 people in the United States so far this season). According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 is deadlier than the flu based on current numbers, but does not transmit as easily.<sup>3</sup>
3. For most of the American public, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.<sup>4</sup> For the already sick, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems, the risk is higher.

Great peace have those who love  
your law; nothing can make them  
stumble.  
**Psalms 119:165**

### OUR RESPONSE

1. Faith, not Fear - Disease is a fact of existence. We are not to panic, but to trust God. The Lord remains our refuge and strength, “an ever-present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1). To trust in the Lord amid trouble is to experience and bear witness to the power of Christ.
2. Prayer - We are called to be people of prayer, caring for the sick and dying (Matt. 10:8), at times at the risk of our own lives (John 15:13). Pray for our leaders, doctors, and caregivers, to bring healing and be protected from harm.
3. Wisdom - We are called to use wisdom at all times, so here’s what that looks like:
  - Gatherings - Our Sunday gatherings are all still happening. Nothing has been cancelled. However, if you are sick, or you think you might be, please stay home and get better. If you’ll let us know, we’d love to pray for you and get you a link to the livestream of our Sunday gatherings until you recover. And, we’ll continue to monitor the best recommendations from public health officials.

There is no fear in love, but perfect  
love casts out fear.  
**1 John 4:18.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Summary,” from The Centers for Disease Control. <<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>>

<sup>2</sup> Joel Achenbach, Lenny Bernstein, Neena Satija and William Wan, “How bad will the coronavirus outbreak get in the U.S.?” in *The Washington Post*. <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/how-bad-will-the-coronavirus-outbreak-get-in-the-us/2020/03/03/55c5d088-5c9d-11ea-9055-5fa12981bbbf\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/how-bad-will-the-coronavirus-outbreak-get-in-the-us/2020/03/03/55c5d088-5c9d-11ea-9055-5fa12981bbbf_story.html)>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel, Harrell, Matthew Branaugh, and Kayle Rohane, “A Concise Coronavirus Guide for Churches,” in *Christianity Today*. <<http://morect.com/coronavirusguide>>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- Manage the “Meet-and-Greet” Moment - During our regular “meet-and-greet moment,” after we finish singing, try waves and smiles *instead* of hugs and handshakes.
- Pause on Communion - We’ll be pausing our regular practice of taking communion for the next few weeks.
- Increased Cleanliness - We always clean all our spaces well, but we’ll be taking an extra measure of care, especially in the Aletheia Kids spaces.
- Personal Hygiene - Wash your hands! We recommend you check out the [CDC Flu Prevention Guidelines](#). These include things like washing your hands, covering your mouth when you cough, etc.
- Stay Informed - Here are links to [Massachusetts COVID-19 Information](#) and [CDC COVID-19 Information](#).

### **LET’S GO**

Remember, we’re called to make disciples. Nothing—no disease, no war, no fear—can stop the advance of the gospel and the building of God’s church. Stay in faith, stay in the Scriptures, and let’s stay together trusting God for a speedy and safe resolution to this disease and its effects. If anything changes, we’ll let you know.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Grace + peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. A. Walsh" or similar, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Pastor Adam