

Dear congregation of Christ Church,

We are experiencing the challenges and difficulties surrounding the appearance and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the world and now here in the United States, and even in Fort Bend County. I was going to write that we are living in “unusual times,” but panic, disease, and even death have been with us since the Fall. But in our current world of rapid travel and large gatherings, and the near-instant spread of information through media and technology, the way that we deal with this contagious disease is new.

If you have not had the opportunity to read my “[*Some Thoughts on the Coronavirus*](#),” I encourage you to do so. The principles that I laid out (not to panic, to be prepared, and to have perspective) have not changed. They are still the worldview – a Biblical worldview, I believe – through which we must see not only COVID-19 but all of life. But the application of these principles has developed over the past week, with more information coming out and more advice and directives from health and government officials. Our Session and staff are seeking to apply Biblical principles to the life of the church. These principles include: the importance and primacy of gathered worship (Hebrews 13:5), love for our neighbor (Mark 12:31; Galatians 5:14), obedience to the Law of God (particularly the Sixth Commandment), and submission to the governing authorities the Lord has instituted (Romans 13:1-7).

Public Recommendations

Public officials are also being careful and measured at this time, especially regarding the worship of religious groups. They are making recommendations, even using strong language (*e.g.*, “we strongly discourage any gatherings over 250 people”) but are not absolutely prohibiting worship gatherings. I believe this is good and proper, attempting to balance religious liberty and public safety. Fort Bend County Health and Human Services has made [recommendations](#) through its [Emergency Preparedness Program](#), including:

We strongly discourage any gatherings over 250 people from taking place and for organizers to cancel or postpone any such gatherings. Additionally, we strongly encourage organizers of gatherings under 250 people to consider whether they also can be postponed or if additional precautions can be taken to prevent unnecessary risk.

If you cannot avoid bringing a large group of people together, we recommend the following guidelines:

- Anyone who is sick should not attend.
- Those who are at higher risk for COVID-19 should not attend.
- Increase the frequency of sanitizing common touchpoints.
- Try to find ways to give people more physical space so that they are not in close contact as much as possible.
- Ensure an adequate supply of hand soap, disinfectants, tissues, and paper towels.
- Encourage attendees to follow increased hygiene, such as:
 - Washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

- If soap and water are not available, attendees should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with other people
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
- Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue – if available – or into their elbow

What does that mean for Christ Church?

Our Session met on March 13 and approved a new set of guidelines for church activities throughout March. We want to strike the right balance between serving the Lord and showing love to the congregation and community through safety measures. The following parameters will be in place:

Worship: Our Lord’s Day services will continue as usual. **Our services do not exceed the 250 number cited by Fort Bend County Health and Human Services.** We also plan to keep both morning services, even if attendance is less, to spread out seating and allow for social distancing in the service. I would encourage you and your family as much as possible to sit at a distance of two or three chairs in a “pew” from others. **Additionally, if you or a family member are ill or showing symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), please do not come to church.** If you are concerned about your health or are at [higher risk](#) (older adults and those with heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease), you should consider not coming to church. In God’s Providence (and the efforts of Ben Bosma and his sound team), **we have live streaming of our services available now.** You can watch any of the services (8:30 AM, 11:00 AM, or 6:00 PM) on either our [Facebook page](#) or our [website](#). The live stream will only be visible during the service (and for a short time afterward on the Facebook page). You will not be able to see anything until Sunday morning.

There will be some changes around our worship services. **We will not have a nursery for any of the services.** You may bring children into the worship service itself, or you may choose to watch the [live stream](#). There will be no coffee or fellowship time between the services. We will not pass the offering plate during the service but will instead have the plates in the narthex for you to put your offering. **Remember also that you may give safely and securely online through our website at www.cckpca.org/give.** Finally, we are suspending the Lord’s Supper for March only (March 22) and will be exploring changes to the distribution of the elements to facilitate more hygienic practices.

Additionally, **all Sunday school classes (children, youth, and adults) are suspended.** All of these measures are in place until March 31, applying to the Lord’s Days on March 15, 22, and 29. As the end of the month approaches, the Session will re-assess the health situation in Katy and the nation and make further decisions.

Other Christ Church Activities: All non-worship activities are suspended **until March 31.** That includes Sunday school (see above), Christ’s Kids, Youth Group, ESL, Ladies’ and Men’s Bible Studies, Group luncheons/gatherings, and Community Groups. If you have any questions about an

activity, you should assume it is suspended, and you may call the Church Office for more information. Our Sandwich Supper that was scheduled for March 29, has been canceled.

Non-Christ Church Activities: All non-Christ Church activities are suspended **until March 31**. That includes all meetings, school activities, music recitals, and previously approved building requests. No future building use requests will be approved at this time. As the end of the month approaches, the Session will re-assess the health situation in Katy and the nation and make further decisions.

Where can I find more information or updates?

We have established a section of our website at www.cckpca.org/coronavirus as a hub for updates about congregational life during this time. There are some resources also available on that page. Even though these resources are not exhaustive by any means, as is the nature of the internet, going to one link will lead you to other resources. We will maintain links to trusted and official health authorities and governmental recommendations. While we want you to remain informed, we do not want to be in the business of spreading rumors or unconfirmed claims.

In conclusion, I want also to let you know as your pastor that I am praying for you. I am not only praying that you will remain healthy and secure, but that the Lord will grant you opportunities to trust Him and grow spiritually at this time. I am praying that the Lord will give us opportunities as a congregation to serve each other and our community and show that we are not afraid because we rest in the One who holds all things in His hands.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Greco".

Pastor Greco