



Dear Flock,

The Elders and Church Board wanted to provide you with an update on how Highland Hills Baptist Church is addressing the evolving challenges of the coronavirus — COVID-19. Food, travel and the entertainment industries have already been seriously impacted. From coast to coast the medical establishment is also doing its very best to meet pressing needs. And we are being warned that inevitably there will be many more cases coming. How many more will depend on the cautionary measures we take today.

With that in mind, following new restrictions that came out last night and this morning and again out of an abundance of caution we feel the only safe and reasonable path is to fully comply with the latest CDC/ gov. restrictions in the hope of slowing this pandemic down and eventually stopping it in its tracks.

Accordingly, effective tonight, we have cancelled all Church functions including worship services, mid-week meetings, committee meetings, youth gatherings, AWANA and SundaySchool/Flock activities over a timespan up to and including April 5th. At that point we will re-evaluate where things are and seem to be heading. We feel this a regrettable but necessary step, in obedience to governing authorities and for the wellbeing of our people.

Questions:

- 1) What about meeting in homes or outdoors for worship/fellowship gatherings? While an appealing idea, it defeats the purpose of “social distancing” which is more and more the emphasis for staying healthy. Better to use the phone, texting, skyping and email for staying connected. Some committee meetings could be handled in this manner as well.
- 2) Will there be any live streaming? We are not set up for this currently. We are looking into it and other options including simply having the Sunday message recorded (as usual) on our website. Stay tuned.

- 3) Can we still give our offerings or benevolent gifts? Yes. The church office will be open during regular office hours. You can also mail in your offering if preferred. Your faithful support is appreciated as the needs of the ministry continue whether we gather or not. Moreover, the church staff will still be available for administrative purposes, counseling and overall ministry needs.
  
- 4) With schools out, will the Family Center be available for use? Unfortunately no. Use of all parts of the building including the Family Center will be suspended for the same reason that sports and fitness venues have been shut down. The coronavirus can live for hours on a wide variety of surfaces. We cannot guarantee that everything touched or used would be sanitized after each visit. Should several families be involved “social distancing” again comes into question. The better part of wisdom would be to discontinue the use of Family Center until further notice. :(

Finally, every crisis brings with it open doors for ministry. We may not be able to confront the medical complexities of a global pandemic, but we are uniquely poised to encourage those around us with the promises of God and the comfort of His Word. As a church family, let us check on the needs of our elderly to be sure they’re being met. This means regular monitoring as we all try to stay informed and think ahead. Be mindful of the importance of personal prevention in halting the spread of disease. And above all, we should pray. Pray for our leaders, medical personnel, missionaries, first responders, neighbors and for one another. Pray too, for a mighty working of God’s Spirit that many will be savingly brought to Christ at this time. Let us everyone, keep our eyes on the prize remembering that while there may be clouds on the horizon, it is also full of hope.

P.S. We will continue to keep you updated by email and on our website. Further cancellations will be posted on channels 8 and 13. If you know of someone who is not receiving our emails and wants to be connected, please get in touch with their contact information. Also we will be sending these communiques out by snail mail.

Still in the Grip of His Grace,  
James Wells