



March 13, 2020
Dear Orchard Church family,

I am writing to let you know that the elders at The Orchard are fully aware of the mounting concern over the coronavirus COVID-19 and its spread. Some have been asking questions about various church events, and rightly so. The elder board has spent time praying about this and discussing it. While we do not want to be overly reactive and potentially feed into a panic situation, we do want to protect the body as best we can.

We fully acknowledge that God is firmly in control and we refuse to give in to the fear that is spreading faster than the coronavirus. Yet, even as we have peace in the sovereignty of our Lord, we are called to be wise, to use the intelligence He has given us, and to be faithful shepherds. And so, we have also peace in our hearts over our decision.

At this point in time, we have decided to suspend all extra church activities outside of Sunday services and Growth Groups. This would include events such as Orchard Youth Ministry and its scheduled lock-in, the Women's Tea and the Ministry Leaders Meeting. No single event which is able to be rescheduled down the road is worth unnecessary risks which we recognize as real. That said, here are some basic guidelines for Sundays and Growth Groups:

1. If you, or someone in your immediate family has any symptoms (mild or severe), such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath it is best to stay home.
2. If you are at higher risk (e.g., chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease) you may wish to stay home.
3. Wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. Simple yet very important.
4. Unfortunately, bypass the hugs and handshakes you may normally share with others. Makes me sad ☹️

Much more detailed can be found on the Center for Disease Control's website....
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>

If you are sick or in need of help, please contact us. You are loved.
Above all, be prayerful, remembering that God alone is the stability of our times (Isaiah 33:6).

If you are to miss a Sunday, the sermon is typically posted on the website and our Facebook page on Tuesday afternoon. We are also working on setting up the process to have it broadcast live on Facebook as well.

We are thankful for each of you, for your love for the Lord and your dedication to The Orchard Church.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Scott
Luis Ardon, elder
Craig Hippensteel, elder
Jeff Knoll, elder

“for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7

A PRAYER FOR OUR TIMES

The following is adapted from a prayer circulating in China. May our hearts be united before our Lord.

Heavenly Father, you are the Mighty Savior, Lord of Life, full of mercy and grace.

Have mercy on afflicted patients, comfort their families. Help them find abundant life in your Son. Heal and relieve people of their pain according to your righteousness, lovingkindness, and mercy. May the mighty hand of God be upon the pandemic; eradicate the virus, stop its spread!

Look after the frontline medical workers. Keep them strong and healthy. Give them wisdom and faith while treating others. Watch over researchers, who are working day and night investigating the disease. May they discover the rules and orders in the nature that you have created. Aspiring to your wisdom and greatness, may they identify ways to suppress the virus and find effective treatment of the infection.

Guide and strengthen local churches and individual Christians. May the areas where they live be blessed because of their presence. Give us a respectful heart; enable us to exercise wisdom in daily life. Help us lead a life of integrity. Show us your grace; heal our land, our cities, our people, our nation, our world.

Thank you for being with us and looking after us every day. Glorify your name. In Jesus name we pray,

Amen.