

Sent from Governor Edward's office. All may not apply to your church.

Dear Pastors,

As I communicated with you on Friday, in Isaiah 41:10 - we need not fear for He is always with us! God will provide comfort for us today and will continue to sustain us in the days ahead.

The Governor updated his public health emergency proclamation by adopting the updated CDC recommendations to protect the people of Louisiana and prevent the community spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus. These measures which take effect at midnight include:

- No gatherings with 50 people or more and those in the high risk categories should not be around more than 10
- Casinos and bars will be closed
- Restaurants will be closed to patrons eating on site. Take-out, drive-through and delivery orders are allowed.
- Movie theaters will be closed.
- Gyms and fitness centers will be closed.

Clearly, the 50 people or more ban calls on our faith community to be creative in serving the spiritual needs of your congregations. We must adhere to the 50-person cap in spaces of worship. Here are a couple of things you can do:

Church Services

- Multiple 50-person services including Saturday services
- Utilizing social media (Facebook live, recorded messages, church websites, and electronic giving via cashapp and other approaches, etc.)

Recommendations to Prevent Illness

- Pray for the health of our people and that our leaders exercise thoughtful judgement during this time.
- Stay informed about COVID-19 – I am sharing resources below that will be helpful.
- In preparation for and during Communion Service please exercise extreme caution - to avoid possible transmission of coronavirus.
- Communicate with your congregations about how to best take care of themselves and their families:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for twenty seconds.
 - If you are feeling sick stay home.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.

- Limit close contact with others as much as possible and avoid shaking hands.
- If you feel the need to engage your primary care physician it is wise to call him or her prior to an office visit.
- We must understand that this virus has the most impact on individuals 60 or older or those with compromised immune systems - we encourage creative approaches to meet the spiritual needs of those members without putting them at risk.

Pastors have been calling me this morning with creative ideas about how best to officiate funerals. See below for one example from the Rev. Dr. Sam Tolbert of Lake Charles and President of the National Baptist Convention of America – he created this template today for a large funeral he will do this weekend: *(Pastors if you are interested in seeing the example contact BBA office and we will be glad to send it to you)*

As Gov. John Bel Edwards has said, “This is a very serious situation that demands a prompt and serious response. Louisiana is among the states with the fastest growing number of COVID-19 cases. The only way we will flatten the curve and reduce the spread is if we put the hygiene requirements and social distancing into practice.”

Let us continue to lift each other up in prayer. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Prayer works!

In hope and faith,
Adren

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