



Canvas Family Letter

Our Response to the Coronavirus

As the world navigates through the complexities of dealing with the coronavirus issue, please be aware that Canvas Church takes very seriously the health of every member of the Canvas family. It is our plan to assure that every possible consideration and precaution is taken. Depending on who you listen to, the coronavirus (COVID-19 virus) is a coming plague of biblical proportions or an over-hyped media creation. However, with people being diagnosed in Tennessee, we need to implement some precautionary measures listed below. We are not afraid, just cautious.

We belong to God, and He has said many times, "Do not be afraid". The apostle Paul said, "Don't be anxious for anything, but with prayer let your requests be known to God and His peace will guard your hearts and minds." All over the Bible there are countless appeals to us to seek God in the midst of confusion. My rendition of Psalm 27:1-5 goes like this, "Though an army (virus, stock market collapse, and lack of toilet paper) besiege me, my heart will not fear."

FIRST SOME PERSPECTIVE! The coronavirus, or COVID-19 virus, has now been declared a pandemic. According to the CDC, there have been 938 cases and 29 U.S. deaths. NOT ONE of those dying, in the world, has been under 10 years old, and it is very rare for any healthy person under 50 to die from this virus. There is still a lot of uncertainty to if and how the virus will continue to spread. We believe that it is important to be aware and take precautions. Proverbs 22:3 tells us, "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. (NLT)"

CHURCH RESPONSE. Think of the situation as a tornado watch.

Sunday Service and Groups: We are implementing reasonable social distancing measures for the church. The social distancing measures the church is now requesting you take are: (1) talking to people from about 3 feet away, (2) not shaking hands, (3) not hugging, (4) greeters will open and close the doors for you to reduce potential risks. We are asking the church to follow these guidelines.

Canvas Kids and Uprising: We do not see the need to close the nursery, Canvas Kids or Uprising Youth meetings, because the risk to elementary aged children is so remote. The greater risk is to the teachers. Our cleaning team will take extra time to clean and disinfect our toys and kids play areas.

Cleaning: The church is cleaned each Friday/Saturday. We will increase our scope of disinfecting door handles and other public areas. Hand sanitizer will be available at every gathering.

Communion: For the time being, we will use individual self-contained communion cups instead of our normal communion procedures. This will continue until further notice.

IF the virus outbreak increases, and if it still appears to have a significant fatality rate, we will treat it like a tornado warning. We may simply ask those who are over 50 years of age, with chronic health problems or compromised immune systems to consider staying home and using our weekly Podcast to stay up to date with our current series. Our Sunday sermons are put online every Tuesday. IF things start to worsen, we may decide to go to digital church meetings using Facebook Live and other streaming sources.



What you can do:

1. Start practicing better hygiene now. Your best protection from any virus is good hygiene. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Flu and other serious respiratory illnesses, like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), are spread by cough, sneezing, or unclean hands. **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

2. If you feel physically ill, at all, PLEASE STAY HOME. We are always glad to have someone come to your home to pray for your healing, and you do not have to be here to get prayer. This also applies to anyone in your house feeling ill: the whole family should stay home. I can now see every 7-year old “not feeling well” on Sundays. Haha!

3. Also, your pantry should be well stocked. Keeping 30 days of stuff you normally use is wise as a regular practice because of tornadoes, ice storms, flooding, etc. People hoarding goods and cleaning supplies from fear is normal in the current situation and can make buying them difficult if you wait until you need them. Also, having extra means you can serve your neighbors around you, to show them the care of God.

Lastly, consider the model of the early church in times of epidemics. They didn't shrink back; they thrived! Rodney Stark's book *The Rise of Christianity* on the role of the church during times of medical crisis is fascinating. His chapter on “Epidemics, Networks, and Conversion” shows the comparison of the medical community with the example of the most famous physician in Rome named Galen. He could not heal the sick, and so he fled the cities and rode out the disaster in his wealthy country home. But, Christian preachers like Cyprian and Dionysius helped people make sense of death and loss and reminded them of the hope of the resurrection. But they also urged Christians to keep showing love and charity no matter what. We are called to this same love!

As you take precautions and make preparations, do it with the Kingdom in mind. We are called to love and serve our families, our church, and our community. Canvas leadership will be prayerfully considering these things as we seek to act in wisdom, kindness, and courage.

Loving people to life,

Pastor Nick Rains

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“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:10 ESV