

March 13, 2020

Dear Church Family and Friends,

As you know, this is the time of year when the spread of viruses represents a significant concern for many individuals and families in our community. This year, in particular, these concerns have been increased given the rapid spread influenza, pneumonia, and COVID-19 (coronavirus).

What this means for our church: We will be taking precautions to keep everyone healthy.

- As of today, there are no founded cases of COVID-19 in Linn County
- As of today, there are 16 cases of COVID-19 in Iowa, most related to a cruise to Egypt—none in Linn County

In support of members of our community who would be most vulnerable to these conditions, we are implementing the following preventative measures to do our part to ensure as safe an environment for church members as possible:

- During worship we are encouraging the alternative form of greeting one another by head nodding, bowing, waving, or sharing a peace sign instead of shaking hands or hugging.
- Offering will be collected at a stationary location and we invite you to drop your tithe off there instead of our traditional passing of the offering plates.
- Coffee will continue to be provided on Sunday morning. Please use tongs if selecting a treat.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water is encouraged! Hand sanitizer is available at the entrances to the sanctuary and in the fellowship hall as well as various locations near the gym.
- Please make sure to cough or sneeze into your elbow, turning away from others as much as possible. Kleenex tissues are available throughout the building.
- In addition to our regular cleaning, we will be regularly cleaning and disinfecting all doorknobs, handles, and frequently used surfaces at the Church.
- We are encouraging everyone to please stay home if you are showing any signs of illness.

We are going to try and do a live stream of our service on facebook live (<https://www.facebook.com/thechurchnorthland>) to watch live or at your convenience.

We appreciate your willingness to work together to promote the health and well-being of our entire community. We will continue to monitor the latest recommendations from governmental agencies and hope that these measures will soon be unnecessary. You can find the latest information at The Iowa Department of Public

Health website ([www.idph.iowa.gov](http://www.idph.iowa.gov)) or the National Center for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).

The following is information from the American Baptist Home Mission Societies:

The World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus a *pandemic*, defined as the "worldwide spread of a new disease." Given the unfolding of COVID-19 in the United States, American Baptist Home Mission Societies is striving to inform American Baptists and American Baptist congregations about best practices to help reduce the spread of the virus in general as well as in congregational settings.

**There are actions everyone can take to work together to deal with this crisis:**

- Pray for one another.
- Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- Be aware-the coronavirus is impacting high-risk groups, such as the elderly; those with severe chronic medical conditions or underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung or heart disease; and those with compromised immune systems.
- Anyone who has been exposed, whether they know it or not, may transmit the virus to others. Use caution and put community before personal convenience.
- Stay home if you are in a high-risk group; if you are feeling sick, have a fever, cough, difficulty breathing; have traveled to a quarantined or affected area; or have come in close contact with someone with or suspected of having the illness in the past 14 days.
- Call, write and stay connected to folks who are under quarantine or practicing social distancing.
- Share accurate information from reliable sources.

To that end, let us be faithful and vigilant in our prayer for those nations, communities, families and individuals most affected by this outbreak, those who are affected because of shut downs and closures during this time of social distancing, and for the medical personnel and government officials seeking to respond. Finally, let us show respect to those who are deeply concerned about these viruses and resist any temptation to invalidate their concerns or personal precautions.

God's Blessings to you all.