



WELLSBORO BIBLECHURCH

2020 COVID-19 Coronavirus Outbreak Response Plan

The COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak has induced a global crisis that impacts our families, our community, and our church. It is difficult to know how to respond to this unprecedented situation impacting health, social, and economic norms. To guide us through this pandemic, the elders and staff of WBC have established guidelines based on the following principles:

Guiding Principles

1. **It is the normal practice of Christians to gather.** (Hebrews 10:24-25; Colossians 3:16; Acts 2:42, 20:7; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:16)

Christians are not meant to live in isolation. The command and example of the New Testament demonstrates the critical importance of Christians gathering for worship on the Lord's Day, and to encourage one another throughout the week. Our response to COVID-19 must include a gathering of the saints for worship and encouragement.

2. **If requested, we should submit to the government and honor our neighbors by not gathering.** (Romans 13:1-10; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Titus 3:1; Galatians 5:14; Mark 12:31; 1 Corinthians 16:14)

If the government asks us to temporarily suspend our gatherings, it is right for us to do so. In the case of COVID-19, we honor the government's efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus by heeding this request. This also demonstrates love to our neighbors who may be put at risk or frightened by the potential for viral transmission during our church gatherings. The government is not singling out churches as an act of persecution, nor are officials asking us to permanently disband. Therefore, we see humble compliance as the righteous and loving response.

Tough Decisions

These guiding principles have helped us make some difficult decisions over the past several days. Recent CDC and White House guidelines have included a plea for any groups larger than 10 to refrain from gathering for a period of 8 weeks. Although we are discouraged by this regulation, we are thankful to live in an age where we can still communicate online. **This is not a substitute for the regular face-to-face assembly of the church.** Instead, we are making temporary efforts to take advantage of any opportunity to continue to study God's Word, pray, sing, and encourage one another during this time social distancing.

The Plan

1. For the next several weeks we will hold services online using an interactive video service. The main worship service will be held at 10am on Sunday mornings. The flow of the service will be similar to what you have experienced at our live services, however the length of the service will be shortened to encourage child engagement and small group discussion. **A link will be sent out via email and posted on the Wellsboro Bible Church Facebook page.**
 - We will hold two test gatherings (7pm on Wednesday 3/18 and Thursday 3/19) so you can make sure the technology is working on your end. A link to the broadcast will be sent to your email and posted on the church facebook page. You can access the livestream using a computer or cell phone. **Please call the church (570-724-3741) if you have any trouble connecting.**
2. We encourage you to gather in small groups (10 or less) in your homes to participate in the service together. These small groups will give you an opportunity to interact with, care for, and be encouraged by other members of the body of Christ. A small group discussion and prayer guide will be provided each week to be used in conjunction with the online worship service. If you're not sure who to gather with, please call the church office and we will help you find a group.
3. All in-person church events are cancelled until May 12. Some events may be able to be live-streamed. Stay tuned to your email and the church facebook page for details.
4. The elders and staff will release videos on Facebook on Sunday nights, Tuesday nights, and Thursday nights at 6pm. Please tune in as we provide short, encouraging messages during this time.
5. The elders will be in contact with all of our members. If you need us before we are able to reach you, please call the church office.
6. We are actively looking for ways to serve our community during this difficult time. Please ask church members, family, friends, neighbors, and others how you can help them. If you have resources, be sure to share them. Most of all, do not discourage through negative talk, social media posts. etc.
7. Spend time daily praying for those impacted by the fallout from this virus.
8. Please call the church if you have any needs we can help meet or questions we can answer.
9. As soon as we are free to gather again we will! During times like this we realize what a privilege it is to gather and we long for the day we are reunited.

A Reminder

God is still sovereign and He is still good. In His providence, He has allowed us to walk through this trial together. Let us use this as an opportunity to keep our eyes fixed on Christ while pointing others to Him.