

My Dearly Beloved Church Family:

One of the most challenging realities of pastoral ministry is having to make decisions for the congregation that will be met with both appreciation and consternation. The following may be one of those decisions.

I have spent considerable time in conversation with our church's leadership, regarding how best to respond to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) that has now become a pandemic around the world. At the time of this writing, 46 states have confirmed that individuals have reported contracting this virus, and multiple deaths have been recorded both inside and outside of the United States. As we have learned, the elderly population is most at risk, but we also know that persons can carry the virus for up to five days before they experience any symptoms, no matter what age they may be.

Based upon the sheer membership of our congregation, we have decided to suspend our regular activities at Shiloh Baptist Church during this challenging time, just to be sure we do not unwittingly expose any of our brothers and sisters to any sickness or disease. Beginning today, March 17th, the church campus will be closed to ensure that our church family is kept safe to the degree that we can secure such safety. We will make follow-up determinations each week, and as soon as we feel it is wise for us to return to our weekly activities, we will do so.

Our Sunday worship will consist of cyber worship that will be viewed via our website. I will share some verbal remarks regarding worship and our ever-evolving plans during that time. ***Please do not come to the church campus during this time!*** Do your best to stay home as much as you can so that you do not cause yourself or anyone else any undue harm.

Whether you receive this note with appreciation or consternation, let's pray for one another during this time. Let's pray for our congregational and governmental leadership as decisions continue to be made with regard to this pandemic. This is a most sensitive time, so the people of God must "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Let's trust our God to bring us through these challenging times, as He has done so many times before. And rest assured, your pastor is praying for you!

May our God give us peace as we safeguard our trust in Him!

With Pastoral Care

Reverend Gregory C. Mack