

March 20, 2020 (Revised letter of March 14)

Dear Marlowe Assembly Church Family,

It appears that there is no escaping the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. It seems to be the topic of most conversations and media sources. As the moments pass, more and more are affected by it. Countless cancellations have and are taking place. I have been asked by a goodly number how this may impact our church.

At present we are closing Sunday school and church for the next 2 Sundays. Our Wednesday Family Night is also closed.

I encourage you to take your precautions. As I've said to a few, "It is better to have taken your precautions to find that you didn't need to than to not take the necessary precautions and wished you had. Better safe than sorry. This virus has already touched some that I know and care about. My dad often said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I had originally reported that hospitals in our area are reported to be full without any patients having the COVID-19 virus. That has since changed. The hospital to which I serve as a chaplain is the hospital that had the first case of the COVID-19. Fortunately, I have not been called to the hospital, and I have been notified that I will only be called for critical matters. It is clear that being preventative might help to keep from overtaxing the medical professionals and facilities of our area. I trust you see the wisdom in making a best effort to divert a possible crisis.

We are making our attempt to take a proactive approach against the spread of the disease by following the guidelines set by the CDC.

### **Here's what we encourage you to do:**

- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) recommendations for personal hygiene and contact during this time. (For more information on Coronavirus, visit [www.cdc.gov/nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/nCoV).)
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
  - Clean (with soap and water) and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- When services resume, it may still be advised for a while that we continue to refrain from personal contact during services. Please don't be offended when people don't shake your hand or hug you! That is a means of protecting you. Acceptable measures of greeting might be to wave or to use the elbow bump. Consider allowing space between you and others when seated during worship.

In the event that you are sick, please don't hesitate to call the church. We want to hold you up before the Lord in prayer. If you are home alone and sick, let us know by calling the office and leaving a message so that we can check up on you. Especially during this time be reminded that God's Word bids us to love our neighbors and enemies. You will likely have more opportunities to do that. If you have down time and should be stuck at home, use the opportunity to read God's Word and pray for the many needs around you. Also, if you should be available to offer assistance to those of our church family who may be stuck at home and have need, please notify the office of your availability. The office number is (304) 274-2474.

It is so important that when we experience matters that are out of our control, that we be ever mindful that God is in charge of all things. We can trust Him and cast all of our cares upon Him. We are not called to walk in fear. We are called to walk in faith and not allow fear to overrun our thoughts.

Philippians 4:6-7 reads, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

We have ramped-up our internal communications regarding this situation and would like to reassure everyone that we are focused on the well-being, both spiritual and physical, of our congregation and staff of Marlowe Assembly. I will continue to partner with our Board to monitor the situation and communicate accordingly.

I trust we will see you soon and we can celebrate victory together!

Love & Prayers,

Pastor Jim Lloyd