



March 13th 2020

Greetings Heartland Family,

As the world responds to coronavirus (COVID-19), the question naturally arises of how the leadership of Heartland Church plans to proactively adapt to this event in our community and the world. While we know this virus is primarily spread through close contact, we want to take precautionary measures to create a safe and healthy environment for us all to gather and worship together at Heartland.

Clearly, a crisis like this can create a high level of fear, but thankfully we can celebrate the provision of our Lord who has “...**not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-control!**” (2Timothy 1:7). This certainly does not mean we should be careless or reactionary; rather, we can proactively work together to serve our church and community in a way that demonstrates trust in our God who is in control. Challenging times like this may even provide opportunities for us to share hope with those around us. We know there are many people who need to know Jesus, and need to know the peace that only He can provide. I ask you to prayerfully join us in creatively seeking ways we can respond like Christ to the needs around us.

At this time, we have made the decision to cancel our main service for this Sunday, March 15th. We will assess the situation on a week to week basis, all while praying for God’s leading and direction for decisions. We are committed to praying for the best but planning for the worst. We are closely monitoring updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and listening closely to other leaders and authorities as the situation unfolds. Even when we are closed, we will be livestreaming on Sunday mornings, here is some information about that:

Our livestream test this past Sunday was very successful. There were no interruptions in audio or video and with no advanced warning or advertising we unexpectedly had 199 individuals viewers watch part or all of our Sunday morning service. We will continue to livestream on Facebook through our Heartland page. When services are cancelled, or If you find yourself sick or unable to attend a Sunday morning service, we encourage you to join us online. (<https://www.facebook.com/heartlandlex/>)

To keep things in perspective, here are some facts and prevention suggestions, followed by four specifics we as a leadership team feel are wise actions to implement in response to the current situation when we resume our Sunday morning gatherings:

THE FACTS

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that is rapidly spreading around the world. The majority of cases are mild and get better without treatment. However, approximately 14 percent are serious, and 5 percent are critical. Older people and those with chronic diseases are far and away the highest risk group. The current death rate for recorded COVID cases is significantly higher than that of the common flu. It is also important to know, however, that according to John Hopkins Medicine, as of March 11, 2020, the flu is showing a much greater impact on Americans than COVID-19. For example, as of March 11, there have been approximately 121,564 COVID-19 cases worldwide with 1,050 cases in the United States; while in the past year there have been an estimated 1 billion flu cases worldwide and 9.3 million to 45 million cases in the United States. Over this same period of time, there have been approximately

4,373 COVID-19 deaths reported worldwide with 29 in the United States, compared to an annual death rate of between 291,000 to 646,000 worldwide and 12,000 to 61,000 in the United States. Perspective helps.

PREVENTION

The best personal prevention is to regularly and thoroughly wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as an alternative. We should avoid touching our eyes, nose, and mouth, and whenever reasonably possible maintain a distance of between three and six feet between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. If you have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, we recommend you seek medical attention.

SANITIZING

Our staff and team are committed to wiping down surfaces with disinfectant and keeping our facilities as clean as possible. We are also making hand sanitizer more readily available throughout our building.

OFFERING

As we do not pass baskets for our offering, we will continue to utilize the giving boxes at the auditorium doors. If you cannot be at church or would prefer, we recommend that you give your tithes and offerings online at www.heartlandlex.com.

COMMUNION

Our typical method of using individual communion cups is the preferred means of communion during a season like this. We will continue to do so in this manner, and those preparing communion will not only wash their hands well as normal, but will be wearing gloves as well during the preparation. Instead of passing trays from person to person, we will have multiple stations in the auditorium where individual communion elements will be available.

We will provide necessary updates to you via email and post them on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/heartlandlex/>, and on our website, www.heartlandlex.com.

We ask that you be prayerful for our world and community, specifically for those who are directly impacted by this virus, and be watchful for opportunities to put faith into action and be the hands and feet of Jesus during this time.

Prayerfully,

Pastor Andy and the Leadership Team at Heartland