



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 1 / Issue 1

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

In times like these it's important that we stay together as a community no matter the distances between us. Now more than ever with the Governors order to "shelter- in place" we must as a church community of Christians live as the on-the-ground extension of the supremacy of Jesus by advancing his Gospel in distance and depth. How do we do that when church buildings are closed and we are requested to "shelter-in-place." In an effort to keep our congregation together virtually we will be posting newsletters. The content will include prayer requests, articles of interest, devotional readings, and member updates. In future issues we will have writings and musings from pastors and others in the ministry.

If you have prayer requests or updates on your family we encourage to submit them to the email address at the end of this newsletter.

As we will be missing the communal part of our worship service, lets start with a song. And sing along.



(click enable editing to play)



Announcing our Newsletter

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Coronavirus -What Can We Do?

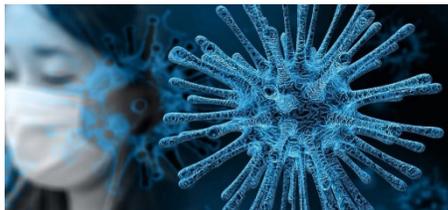
As Christians what is our response to the virus.

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Coronavirus - What Can We Do?



In addition to following all the guidelines to stay safe, as Christians what can we and what should we do? The hymn, *In Times Like These* provides a concise answer. The lyrics give us a simple path to follow.

In times like these, we need a Savior
In times like these, we need an anchor
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock

In times like these oh be not idle
In times like these we need the bible
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock

In times like these, I have a Savior
In times like these, I have an anchor
I'm very sure, I'm very sure
My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock
That Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the one
That Rock is Jesus, The only One.

Christianity and Christians do, however, have something to offer the world in an era of uncertainty. They have the sure promises of Christ.

A large part of the Christian response to COVID-19 and other trending anxieties is vocational. Christians can and should do practical things like washing their hands and staying home when sick. The vocational focus also calls us to look close to home--to care for and watch over spouses, children, co-workers, and congregants.

Luther's advice is fitting here. In 1527, during the spread of a plague, Luther wrote a letter concerning how Christians should respond. He gives the same kind of practical advice we hear today, such as stay home if you are sick or think you may have contracted the disease, take medicine, and listen to physicians.

Most importantly, as a preacher, Luther assails our gripping for control in situations of uncertainty. He notes that, first, an abundance of fear causes one to forget they have been delivered by Christ. They wrongly think death is the worst thing they can face. Second, they focus on preserving themselves at the expense of their neighbor. Luther writes, "In this way, [such a person] tries to

bring about that we despair of God, become unwilling and unprepared to die, become so enveloped in dark clouds of fear and worry that we forget and lose sight of Christ, our light and life, forsake our neighbor in his need, and so sin against God and man." (To John Hess, November 1527, Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, p. 238.)

As Christians there are two things that we should be doing. The first is to be prayerful. The second is to be present. We already have a long prayer list but we need to add to that all those individuals that are battling the virus and all the health care workers. Being present is just how it sounds. By serving one's neighbor in times of sickness and death, Christians are also reminded that they are not called to save or heal the entire world. We do not take on the weight of sin crashing against the entire world because we know Christ alone can and has faced the sin of the whole world. This means the Christian response is both common and unique. It's common in that it shares physical concern and burden for neighbor. It's also unique in proclaiming Christ not as a cure for COVID-19, but for its root cause and goal, sin and death. For this disease, while not the result of some particular sin, is like everything else that ails our world: it shows how sin and death have invaded and impacted every aspect of human life.

Every Christian must answer this question, "How do you view the world around you?" In other words, what is your lens through which you see these circumstances and evaluate this threat? Is there anything unique to Christianity that should impact the response of the Christian such that it is different than many of the 1.1 billion other media mentions of #Coronavirus?

The Christian's response should be different. We should not consider this virus without hope (cf., [1 Thess 4:13-18](#)). Our response should invoke questions from those around us as they see our calm demeanor, care for others, and lack of fear (cf., [Matt 5:13-16](#); [1 Pet 2:11-12](#); [3:15](#); [1 John 4:17-19](#)).

For the sake of simplicity, we can direct our focus on three areas as we seek to respond to this virus in a God-honoring, Christ-exalting, others-benefiting way.

RESPONDING AS ONE WHO TRUSTS GOD, *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.* (Isaiah 41:10)

RESPONDING AS ONE WHO LOVES YOUR NEIGHBORS, ³⁷ *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* ³⁸ *This is the first and great*

commandment. ³⁹ *And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 22:37-40)

RESPONDING AS ONE WHO PRAYS, *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)

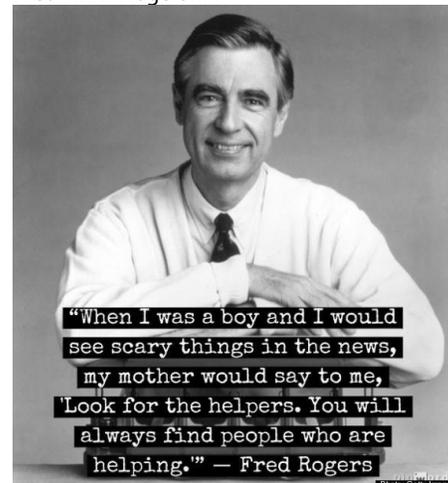
For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

²⁶ *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* ²⁷ *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* (Romans 8:26-27)

⁶ *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:6-7)

Depression has gripped many around us. With everyone sheltering-in-place, (suffering-in-place), social isolation can be defined as a continual lack of contact with other people, which leads to depression and depression causes neurological changes in the brain resulting in mental, emotional and physical changes. Reach out to those around you, neighbors, friends, relatives. Use your phone as a means of reaching out by **talking** into it. Closing this article with a quote by Fred "Mr." Rogers.





PRAYER LIST

✓ **Continuing Prayers for loss:**

All the families that have lost loved ones this past year families.

✓ **Continuing Prayers for physical needs:**

Maria Hatfield, Erwin and Elizabeth Lickman, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria

✓ **Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs:**

The Pastoral Search Committee, Pulpit Supply, Our Deacons, Financial support of the church during the Virus

✓ **Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries:**

BIEM Ministries, The Bartolome Family, Orchard Church, Brad Davis, Pastor and Sue Vitel

✓ **Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs:**
Leonard Hatfield

✓ **Continuing Prayers for:**

The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families

✓ **New Requests:**

Erwin & Elizabeth Lickman as they are quarantined from each other.

Sue Vitel for the recent loss of her brother.

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