



Memo: Coronavirus, Update #3
March 14, 2020
From the Desk of Pastor Chad

Sometimes, we plan and we plan... but the outcome and result look nothing like what we anticipated.

The bottom line: COVID-19 is requiring an unprecedented response. *Do* know that we have consulted leaders in both the medical and theological fields that have heard from only “the best of the best.” We are making major decisions to do all we can in helping stem the tide: we pray to see no community spread or direct contact with the novel Coronavirus.

As of Friday night, the COVID-19 diagnosis has been confirmed in 30 individuals in Virginia. Specifically, central Virginia has been classified as being under a Local State of Emergency. The anticipated spread of this diagnosis is that we will see increased numbers of confirmed and suspected diagnoses; our leaders have indicated COVID-19 will potentially “become worse before it gets better.” Our Governor has requested schools to suspend instruction in their facilities for at least two weeks, while at the same time, requesting large group gatherings be limited in scope and size.

To think: on Thursday, we were just making plans for this week’s worship services, albeit with limitations on who we hoped to see: requesting senior citizens and those with weakened immune systems to stay home, along with insisting no one who might be experiencing any cold or flu symptoms to attend, etc. All of that has changed.

Virginia’s Bishop, the Rev. Sharma D. Lewis, announced Friday morning that **services in all Virginia United Methodist Churches would be hereby suspended for at least two weeks** for in-person, large-group worship. As such, we will proceed with the LiveStreaming Plan that has been in development since our planning began. On Sundays, March 15 and 22, I will join our worship and tech teams for a **live service at 10am**. We will be appropriately spaced apart on stage and broadcast live via our Facebook page. (The links are below.) Connection Cards can be filled out digitally, along with having ways to comment and engage – even **GIVE** options are available for your tithes and offerings.

Once these 2 weeks are in the books, we may hear from leadership sources that our 2-week plan turns into a 3- or 4-week plan (or even longer). Be prepared for us to continue to be the Church God has invited us to be... not much will be changing by way of results, as you’ll see below. We are going to be very busy, very creative and very faithful: I promise. But we need to keep at it, together. This is not a time to get lazy or complacent... so let’s be in prayer over all we can do at our strategic and intentional **best**.

Below, I’m going to mark out some key reminders and points of interest. We have many moving pieces and this is a very complex crisis to manage. We have members and church-member relatives at no less than 5 hospitals in the Richmond area (note: none with COVID-19). We have a very busy pre-Easter calendar on deck for the church. We have many issues that were already keeping our leaders exceptionally invested in daily ministry tasks. It goes without saying: we long for the day to breathe a sigh of relief! (And we should keep washing our hands even after this crisis passes!)

So here are a few things to note:

1). Worship:

Worship is who we are and what we do: God loves it when we worship, so **worship we will!** *Amen?!* This Sunday, March 15, please make plans to join for worship at 10am via LiveStream. There is a link on our homepage or directly to our Facebook page. If you’ve never worshiped via screen... it’s *different!* It will sound, look and feel ...*different*, but you’ll likely be at home in your PJ’s! While we LOVE having the opportunity to worship online, we don’t want to be strangers... we long for the days when we’ll all be back together again **in-person**. Here are the links to help find where to go:

1. **Worship:** Live Stream, 3/15, 3/22
2. Online **Giving**
3. **Small Groups**
4. **Visits/Congregational Care**
5. **Office Hours/Facility Use**
6. **Backpack Ministry**
7. Mission Possible **5K & Festival**
8. Executive Ministry **Team**
9. **MCEF**
10. New Song **Practices**
11. **Immuno-Suppression & Seniors**
12. **Philippians 4:6-8**

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www.newsongumc.org/give

This week's message is #4 of a 5-part message series on **FAIL**. We're continuing our journey through *what to do when things go wrong* via a small group study prepared by Rev. Matt Miofsky. This week, the topic is on **HOPE**. Friends, we need **HOPE** right now – so invite your friends to join us for an online service this Sunday at 10am. We'll do it all again the NEXT Sunday, as well, on March 22... same time, same place!

2). Giving/Offerings/Expenses

It's not every day that we find ourselves in this situation. Logistically, it's true to share: ***we have expenses to pay***. These priorities include ministries, charities, missions, staff, curriculum, subscriptions, etc. In order to be able to provide to all of the responsibilities the Church sustains, we rely heavily upon God's people honoring the call to be generous/tithe.

Our church uses PushPay for E-Giving options. You can give to any fund; you can also set up any 1-time or recurring contribution to the Church. PushPay helps us make this process of tithing available to anyone, anywhere. You can find out about making a financial contribution to the Church through PushPay at: www.newsongumc.org/give
Credit card, bank account, transfers and electronic check options are all available.

Checks can be mailed to the Church, as well. We also have many who choose to give their offerings through their bank, directly. Our Finance & Leadership Teams continue to meet and oversee the ministry operations of the church via email and online tools that equip us for such a time as this. Our work demands and appreciates your assistance in this way.

3). Small Groups

Consideration A:

Small Groups are asked not to meet at the main Church facility. If this raises concerns or questions, please let me know.

Consideration B:

Pray together... text, email, call or send a barbershop quartet of pigeons... *something... anything?* It may be virus time, but we have SO many ways to remain a people of prayer! I believe we can all agree: prayer is **vital** to the journey ahead.

Consideration C:

Small Groups are asked to do all within their power to "stay connected." Email each other a favorite Scripture every morning... have everyone read through the Book of James up until Easter, text out a daily "Get Well Soon" or "Thinking of You" message, for example.

Consideration D:

Be **SMART**. You may very well be in a group where it makes 100% to not meet right now in-person, and we are ready to work with you and your group if that's the case. If you're sick or have symptoms of cold or flu, ***don't go to group; in fact, stay at home, regardless***. If you have a compromised immune system or are over age 55, ***we insist you hold off on meeting in-person as a small group***. If you have been on a cruise, traveled via plane or train in the last 14 days, etc. – ***do not go to group***. If you have been in contact with someone who has cold or flu symptoms, you are also asked to ***stay out of your Small Group gathering***. This is not ageist or intended as offensive instruction. Serious concerns exist within all of these scenarios, and I beg you to not expose others to potentially harmful concerns that might inadvertently be passed along to friends and family.

Several of our groups have agreed to take a "temporary break" until after Easter, but they're still committed to checking-in on one another and working through homework together. **Do** those things... text, email, tweet, post, like, share, FaceTime, call, private message, etc. – ***stay connected (but not contagious)!***

Consideration E:

Get creative... as I shared before:

- You could develop a "Private Facebook Page" whereby only members of your group can participate. You could post daily readings, questions, prayer concerns, needs for assistance, and more on the page for your group to see. If you need help to set this up, just contact either myself or our Church Office.

- You could go *all-digital* with conversation through different web options. One of the most prominently used sites is www.zoom.com. Zoom allows everyone in the group to show up on 1 screen through their phone, tablet or computer. Again, if we can help you set this up, just give us a shout.
- You could use a text or app option: different apps allow us to remain in communication even while having minimal technical skill: Slack is one app, for instance. Other texting apps include: GroupMe or Remind.

4). Visits, Meals, Prayer, SonShine Baskets, etc.

Visitation will need to take on a very different flavor due to the contagious nature of the current environment. As your Pastor, I suffer from psoriatic arthritis, which has been debilitating at times. I take multiple medications to allow for mobility, which comes with an unfortunate side effect of having zero immunity. Trips to the hospital are not possible during an outbreak like this: not only for personal reasons, but also to comply with newly-instituted rules at most area hospitals, nursing homes, rehab centers, etc. If you need care, we want to be there for you and will do all we can in that particular scenario: let us know you are in need of prayer, care, etc. by using our E-Connect Card:

www.newsongumc.org/connect-card

If you need meals, pharmacy runs, prayer, visits, etc. – by all means, fill out this form or call our Church Office: 804-559-6064 (leave a General Mailbox message).

Our staff will be checking voicemail remotely; all calls should be returned no later than 24 hours.

Not only do our seniors and/or hospital patients need our care and attention, so do many in our community. Perhaps start with your neighbors and co-workers or family members and local connections. Ask how others are doing; be genuine as you check on them. Work hard to exhibit the love Christ has for all. Some won't admit it, but they may be scared during times like these. They may need a friend, a text, a prayer... just to know someone cares. **You** could be that person; according to the Scriptures... you are that person. Let us work to be the hands and feet of Christ!

5). Office Hours/Facility Use/Helpful Links

We are doing all that we can to abide by the Governor's and Bishop's requests. **Therefore, our main campus is closed until March 27, 2020**, as we sanitize and aim to have our facility at its best for when we are allowed to return. We understand this will directly impact the Scouts, our Youth & Children, Small Groups, Staff, various community groups and events, Worship, etc. We apologize for this inconvenience. Our staff will be working unique hours; we're here for you.

For Kids, Youth & Adult Discipleship:

We recommend visiting **RightNow Media** (which requires an easy-to-use, FREE account)!

Please be sure to look up results that relate to your desired age-group, interest or topic.

To get started, click the orange button at: www.newsongumc.org/rightnow-media

For Parents:

Hanover County Public Schools shared the following link today for "How to Talk With Your Kids About Coronavirus"

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children

Additional links and **resources** include:

Free cable: <https://www.facebook.com/100003220396038/posts/2828362257281093/?d=n>

Free **museum** tours: https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours?utm_source=facebook.com&fbclid=IwAR1QLFrZSERGO9HwXBunJpgOTv-zdKXT2wCgADmbLaeJjrDegsO7vg9E

Free subscriptions to **educational** sites: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NUKLZN7hGSu1Hzm70kfzBKs-lsSELaEMggS60Bi2O2l/htmlview?usp=embed_facebook&fbclid=IwAR3HqvpLMi97km4UYRozuLdQSILBXNs1IRuqMsLz2Ld2OmmyvInC4Yd1jiA&sle=true

More resources for **families**: [http://view.common-sense-](http://view.common-sense-email.org/?qs=5651c92ff8ba28babcecae7fa77d679486a89fce790dd11f8ef89b38794bfdc50c924ef7a8cdc391c6ce04ec2)

[email.org/?qs=5651c92ff8ba28babcecae7fa77d679486a89fce790dd11f8ef89b38794bfdc50c924ef7a8cdc391c6ce04ec2](http://view.common-sense-email.org/?qs=5651c92ff8ba28babcecae7fa77d679486a89fce790dd11f8ef89b38794bfdc50c924ef7a8cdc391c6ce04ec2)

[59f1067e777225ab62ff28e5bdefa6b65d8e957878ebdd90f5755060d30a4a4d96ecbd9a33d232b70bce6be&fbclid=IwAR1YnqMTT03_5njgS2yvwf-5ODJ-ZUrIdfDtVqdNT0IUUvdJF-porDxjI5U](https://www.facebook.com/newsongumc.org/?fbclid=IwAR1YnqMTT03_5njgS2yvwf-5ODJ-ZUrIdfDtVqdNT0IUUvdJF-porDxjI5U)

Additional link for Children's Learning opportunities: https://fluencyandfitness.com/register/school-closures/?fbclid=IwAR076odeeQmqtQJ9X-ORSd3LkKUEB_QYq8O037h7Rxuguf9r28JDloJwa8

Crisis Counselors: text **NAMI** to 741741; you can also go to: <https://bit.ly/39Nayer>

If you would like to share or receive any further information to New Song regarding use of the facility or resources, please feel free to email or call our Church Office: info@newsongumc.org or 804-559-6064.

6). **Backpack Ministry:**

Each week, a consortium of churches comes together to help feed over 200 kids via the Backpack Ministry. New Song coordinates much of these efforts through the leadership of Mr. Alan Fearnow. Alan has graciously been in contact with each of our Hanover County coordinators and schools in preparation for this scenario of community closures.

Alan reports we would likely be doubling each item for distribution in the next week and then working to restock our shelves in April. You can be preparing for this type of effort by bringing in: **mac 'n cheese cups, ravioli cups, chicken micro cups, fruit cups, smaller sized peanut butter jars, applesauce cups, tuna cans, saltine crackers**, etc. If you would like to offer to volunteer to help with food distributions or be contacted for volunteer opportunities with the Backpack Ministry and/or Hanover County efforts to feed students on free/reduced-cost meals, please let us know via our online Connect Card at: www.newsongumc.org/connect-card

7). **Mission Possible 5K & Festival**

- **A drive-thru packet pick up will be held at the Church's front loop on Friday, March 20, 4:30-6:30pm.** All registered participants will be able to get their t-shirts and swag bags in this drive-thru experience!
- The first 59 vehicles/participants to come through the drive-thru will get to draw a **gift certificate** from Dick's Sporting Goods, ranging in value from \$5 - \$50: don't miss out!
- **Don't let Social Distancing stop you from being social! Just do it *differently* and run or walk your own Virtual 5K!**
- Wear your 5K t-shirt and run or walk on your own, then do the following:
 - #1: Take a picture of yourself in your race t-shirt!**
 - #2:** Tag **#NSMP5K20** on social media and at: [facebook.com/growingnewsong](https://www.facebook.com/growingnewsong)
Not on social media?
 - #3:** Email us your photo to: 5K@newsongumc.org

We appreciate your grace with this change of plans, and we value your support of our next international mission trip serving Haitians scheduled for summer of 2021.

If you'd rather defer your registration fee to the MISSION POSSIBLE 5K & Festival for March 2021 (date TBD), we completely understand and regret we weren't able to provide everything you signed up for.

Simply email us at: 5K@newsongumc.org by March 31st to defer your registration fee.

(Keep this year's t-shirt and swag with our compliments!)

SUNNY days are ahead!

Join us on Sunday, May 31 (or **May 3.1 - 5K Day!**) at New Song Church; wear your race t-shirt and join us for Worship at 9 or 10:30am. We're planning to celebrate our 5K participants and sponsors and share stories about our international mission trips – don't miss out! All are invited!

A **Blood Drive** is also scheduled for May 31 through the American Red Cross. Stay tuned for how to sign-up for this additional opportunity on how to be someone's hero!

8). **Executive Ministry Team**

Last week in our worship services, we invited you to join us on a new journey towards a Simplified Board Structure. We passed out applications to serve and provided an overview of how our current governance structure is set to become much less cumbersome & complex. We are aiming to form an **Executive Ministry Team** and presented this model.

The presentation, job description for board members and an application can all be found on our website: www.newsongumc.org/church-leadership

Feel free to read the attachments, pray and discern, and if God is leading YOU to join, fill out an application today!!

9). MCEF: Mechanicsville Churches Emergency Functions (Community-wide Food, Clothing & Supply Closet)

MCEF is currently in need of volunteers willing to work in their food bank! MCEF is only able to receive food donations at this time. Other contributions will need to be held until a later date when they are able to open at a more “full service” level. The most accurate place for MCEF’s information can be found at: www.facebook.com/4mcef

10). New Song Practices

During this time, more work has been done to re-evaluate multiple practices at our Church, including:

- Handwashing: we will work to wash our hands so much that they are the cleanest little things in the land ☺
- Coughs & Sneezes: we will work to properly cover our cough & sneeze into our upper sleeve to contain germs
- Holy Communion: For now, we will work to utilize sealed, individual communion wafer/juice containers
- Praying: we will work to pray for all parts of this process because we can and we are CALLED to do so
- Passing The Peace/Greeting Time: we will work to be creative and refrain from handshaking or spreading germs
- Joy Boxes/E-Giving: we will avoid passing baskets throughout the service and make use of E-Giving & Joy Boxes
- Facility Use: we will close, work to sanitize & keep the building/congregation free from virus exposure
- Counseling: we will work to have counseling transition to phone/Zoom options for this ministry of healing
- Worship: we will work to invite as many as possible to our LiveStream as possible and engage fully
- Small Groups: we will work to be safe, smart and faithful in how we meet, where we meet and when we meet
- Discipleship: we will work to make use of online opportunities the Church has made available for FREE!
- Supplies: we will not stockpile, but we will obtain what is needed for cleaning purposes (including toilet paper!)
- Special Events: we will work to help others know of our love & care, but not in large gatherings per new “rules”
- Community: we will work to partner with local agencies and causes to best support such ministries in this crisis
- Sickness: we will stay home if we have any cause for concern insofar as our exposure to problematic symptoms
- Giving: we will work to be faithful & fruitful in our giving so the Church can be equipped to do all God requires

11). Medically Fragile, Immuno-Suppressed/Compromised, Senior Citizens

If your health renders you medically vulnerable, we urge you to let us know how we can help AND for you to do what is medically advised. If your immune system isn’t in high gear for any particular reason, we encourage you to participate in the life of the Church via Livestream for a bit longer. If there are ways we can assist you in this process, please say the word. We want to help and we often can ...IF we know the need. You are loved and we want to help, not hurt.

If you are old enough to receive AARP mailings, we also love you and want to be present for you in ways that protect and make you stronger. Never would we want your participation in a program, event or service to position you to be in a more vulnerable space, medically-speaking. The CDC has indicated this virus is *linking* more to those in their upper years vs younger. Know that we pray for you and want you to be healthy. However we can help you, please say the word.

Let’s commit to being **smart**: if we shouldn’t be out, let’s stay in. If we have symptoms, let’s not expose others. If we’re near a sink, let’s wash our hands. If we need to sneeze or cough, let’s cover it. Prepare, pray, connect, care, empathize and repeat. Pray for everyone in the wake of Storm Corona... stay informed from reliable sources, check on (and help) others, join us in worship – sing, pray, listen, give, read, and more! Let’s all remember the words from **Philippians 4:6-8**:

Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me,

what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. (The Message)

Please be in touch, directly, should you have any concerns or questions.
Only the best; will see you very soon!

Faithfully,
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