



Parkview Baptist Church
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THE JOURNEY

The Pastor's Letter



Coronavirus Blues

Governor DeSantos finally put a stay at home Executive Order in place for all of Florida. This means that all non-essential services are to be suspended and people are to stay at home as much as is possible. He did say that churches and houses of worship are "essential" services but he limited the number of people that could gather to 10 or less. He is trying to please the faith community at the same time he is trying to maintain medical precautions. Some pastors and members have balked at these limitations and have raised constitutional questions about First Amendment rights. I will again state what I have written to you before: This is not a First Amendment issue, this is a Great Commandment issue.

The best way to love our neighbor at this time is to stay home, practice social distancing, and follow medical advice. Let me give you an example of an acquaintance of mine who went through an agonizing struggle with COVID-19. Tommy Shapard is the music director of Hendrix Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL. His horrific battle with the coronavirus impressed on me the seriousness of this disease. He almost died in the hospital and just now has miraculously recovered from the virus. Here is part of his testimony and why it is important for us to stay home and stay safe. Tommy writes:

"My recovery at home will be 2-3 weeks, quarantined for 14 days (but I will likely stay wrapped in a metaphorical bubble for much longer). Many of you have asked if I can point to the time when I contracted CV19. I cannot, and the truth of the matter is most of us cannot (and will not). Given the time table, I could had contracted CV19 any time between the end of February through March 13, where I was asymptomatic. How often I have reflected: Was it at a concert? At the college before March 6? At a local dance recital for my daughter? At church during our final in-person worship service on March 8? At a gas station between Tampa and Jacksonville? Stepping outside to grab a stack of my mail? See the issue. Community spread is real, and it was already happening, likely as far back as December in our country. This is why our lack of mass testing back in January is hurting us now. I've paid attention to CV19 as far back as December. As an asthma patient, a respiratory novel virus catches my attention. I listened to the scientists and paid attention to the worldwide numbers and projections. I practiced good hygiene long before it was called for.... Before March 11, the Wednesday night when the NBA shut down games and then the dominoes fell, my family was already practicing safe social practices as best as possible in a world that hadn't stopped, yet."

Despite being careful and mindful, Tommy still got the virus. Would it be wise for a church to expose its members to the virus at a worship gathering? Would it be loving to ask our elderly and high risk members to interact with other church members?

I believe you will say with me that it would not be wise or loving. In fact, it would be irresponsible and unkind. We can get through this together. We have the means to worship through live streaming. We have the ability to communicate through social media and a variety of electronic devices (I have included the letter I wrote to you all in this newsletter). We can even go "old school" and write someone a note or letter. This is a time for us to adjust. God is doing something now that we will not fully understand until many years later. The Gospel is going out in ways we never imagined just a month ago. Would you have ever dreamed that doctors from Samaritan's Purse would talk about Jesus in front of their medical tents in New York's Central Park? Would you have considered it possible that TV anchors on the major networks are talking about prayer and acts of service done in Jesus' name? Would you have imagined that people would suddenly ask for prayer and spiritual counsel as they face the threat of this virus? Did you ever think it possible that people would spend time with their families at home instead of running around to amusement parks, playing sports, and indulging in questionable activities? God is up to something. God is on the move and we are part of it.

Let's embrace this time. A college friend of mine called me this week. He suggested we call each other once a week for 20 minutes and talk about the things of the Lord. This would have never happened before this virus forced us all to stop and look around and reconsider what is important. My friend Earl thinks that this is a new beginning God is putting together for his people to connect with each other and minister to the community. Who can you call and reconnect with? Who can you pray with?

Finally, we can still serve. That is the message for Palm Sunday. Jesus gave us the example that true greatness is through service. We have another Community Relief Day feeding coming up on Wednesday, April 8 at the Fairgrounds. We need 100 volunteers to show up at 7 AM to pack the boxes. Volunteers will be screened for COVID-19 and spaced 6 feet apart while they work. Each church is asked to provide 10 volunteers and donate \$50 to cover administration expenses (insurance, signs, and ads). They are also asked to bring their own masks and gloves and must be between ages 18-65. If you can help, please let me know. PS people who receive the food must register and the food will be delivered to them by city and county employees.

The Coronavirus Blues can get us down but they do not have to. As Larry Norman sang, "Jesus is the Rock and He rolled my Blues away."

Pastor Greg

Motto for Mission 2020: Magnify Jesus as Lord

Mission Statement

The Mission of Parkview Baptist Church is to lift up Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and to obey His Great Commission.
Matthew 28:18-20

Our Purpose Statement

The purpose of Parkview Baptist Church is raising the family of Jesus Christ by leading every member to:

-MAGNIFY HIS LORDSHIP IN WORSHIP
-MULTIPLY HIS FAMILY THROUGH EVANGELISM/MISSIONS
-MATURE HIS CHILDREN THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP
-MODEL HIS LIFE THROUGH SERVICE/MINISTRY
-MINISTER HIS LOVE THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 A.M.

PRESENTED ON PARKVIEW FACEBOOK

April 2020

