



CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

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COVID-19 Statement

March 17, 2020

From the Office of the State Bishop,

The world is anxiously following reports that seem to change almost hourly concerning the COVID-19 virus. While we were not prepared for such news and events; these events didn't catch the Lord by surprise. And, because the Church of God of Prophecy has always been a serving church, we also want to seize this opportunity to serve those in our communities.

I have been in continual communication with the area presbyters about what our response should be. We have earnestly sought the voice and direction of the Holy Spirit to know how to navigate this storm.

I am asking all our churches and senior pastors to stay aware of developments and to comply with government directives issued for our area. The Church is accustomed to amending traditions to stay relevant. Meeting in homes is not a new idea to us; it's how the early church started, and we still do it around the world. Meeting online however is a relatively new approach to ministry. It may be that we actually grow in number, strengthen our bonds one to the other, and deepen our discipleship during this time. The Lord is omnipresent! He already has an online presence ~ May we use this opportunity to increase Him. Let us believe and practice the scripture, "If I be lifted up...I will draw all men to me". [John 12:32]

I and the area presbyters are closely monitoring changing developments and will give you immediate updates if anything changes. The following information may be helpful for you as you prepare for the coming weeks:

- ✚ First, we agree that with the additional measures implemented by both our Federal and Local governments (closure of all non-essential gatherings of more than 10) that we want to lend our support in curtailing the spread of the Coronavirus by cooperating fully and complying with the new directives that have been issued.
- ✚ Second, we view this as a tremendous opportunity to live out our faith in a way that is very tangible. Opportunities will present for you to minister to the sick, the shut-ins, perhaps even the dying. Our prayer is that God **anoint** you and **surround** you and **empower** you to make a difference.
- ✚ Third, we see this as an opportunity to implement changes in the way we do "church" that will impact the harvest for years to come. The church that fails to have an online presence will be a church that overlooks a huge harvest. Increasingly our world looks to the internet for their information and we can't afford to miss this moment. The internet allows us the opportunity to plant churches in places that otherwise would be unattainable.
- ✚ Fourth, we wanted to surround you with the resources to help you navigate the next few weeks. A number of our pastors have made themselves available to help walk you through the process of online church (which includes a way to have the ability for your people to continue to donate while your physical doors are closed). The State Office remains open to assist you in any way.

Links are provided below that are useful and factual.

Gary Smith
Kentucky State Bishop

The United States National Coronavirus Response Team has issued the following update (3/16/2020):

<https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/donald-trump-coronavirus-task-force-update-march-16>

Here is the latest update from our Governor's office and how it impacts Kentucky residents:

<https://kycovid19.ky.gov/>

The International Offices of the Church of God of Prophecy has issued the following response:

<https://www.facebook.com/592471024106585/posts/2889720584381606/?d=n>