

Dear FBC Yazoo City Family of Faith,

In these trying and uncertain times, we have faith and peace in knowing that COVID-19 did not take God by surprise, and He is all-powerful and on His eternal throne as our Almighty God. Paul said in II Timothy 1:7, “. . . God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” So in these days choose to walk by faith and not fear, but at the same time, we must walk in “self-control,” or “sound mind” as stated in some translations. In Proverbs 27:12, Solomon said, “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.” God has blessed us with medical professionals with great talents and knowledge, and we need to hear and process their guidance in our churches in these difficult days. Paul also commanded us to walk in a spirit of love, fulfilling Jesus’ Great Commandment of love. Thus we have to consider the ways we should best love, protect, and help our people in church and in our community with the knowledge and needs of the situation before us. And lastly, as Christian citizens, Paul instructed us in Romans 13:1, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” Our governmental leaders are seeking to guide us with helpful knowledge in this difficult journey, and they need our prayers and cooperation during this time as we seek God’s will for ministry in and through our churches. So with these biblical principles as our guide, here are some basic thoughts and ideas for our church family as we proceed ahead through this trial.

1. For the near future, we will continue to worship God and grow in Christ together through weekly livestreams of worship services at 11 a.m. that can be accessed through the church website. Simply go to the church website at fbcyazoo.org and click on “livestream” at 11 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Starting this Sunday, Ken, John, and myself, along with members of the music ministry and audio and video teams will be there LIVE to lead in worship.
2. We encourage any Sunday School/small group teachers that are interested to consider teaching their lessons via Facebook Live or other online or social media platforms at 9:45 a.m. and encourage your class members to join you.
3. As for as Wednesday night services, I invite you to join together with me on Wednesday nights for Bible study and Prayer Meeting via Facebook Live on my Facebook page at John H. Pace, Jr. Simply go on Facebook and call up my Facebook page at 6 p.m. and we will be able to share this time of worship, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship together. If you have prayer requests to share, text them to me at 601-559-9352 or send them to Jessica in the church office.
4. I greatly encourage all of you to continue to faithfully give your tithes and offerings to support the ministry of FBC Yazoo City, especially during these

difficult and important days. You can continue to tithe and give by mailing your offering in to the church office, through bank drafts, through online giving on the church website, or through text giving.

5. In ministry to those in hospitals, nursing home, and care facilities, please understand that many of them have imposed visitation restrictions and are now limiting who can enter or re-enter. Ministry visits may have to be made during this period via telephone or Facetime calls. Check with your local hospitals and care facilities about possible visitation restrictions.
6. Pray for God to reveal ways you and our church can minister to our unique context in our church and community during this time. Reach out to our church and community with ministry ideas, including:
 - Check on elderly or sick church members to assist them and run needed errands for them. If you are taking items or food to people who are sick, leave the items outside, and call them on the phone to minister to them and let them know you have brought the items.
 - Encourage people who are not able to leave their homes by contacting them to minister to and comfort them during this difficult time.
 - Provide lunches to local students that can be picked up through a drive-thru process at the church.
 - Minister to medical professionals, hospital, nursing home, and hospice staffs during these stressful times for them.
 - Help with financial or ministry assistance for workers and businesses they may face financial struggles during this time.
7. I encourage all of you to pray without ceasing for God's healing, blessing, protection, provision, and comfort during these difficult days for our state, nation, and world. And pray that this crisis will pass as quickly as possible so we can all get back to normal ministry and life. As you daily pray in your quiet time and with your family, friends, and prayer groups, remember these needed areas of prayer:
 - For God to eradicate this virus and protect and save lives.
 - For healing for those who have been infected.
 - For comfort and strength for families where there has been the death of a loved one related to COVID-19.
 - For wisdom, strength, and blessing on our President, Governor, and other governmental leaders guiding us through these times.
 - For protection, blessing, and guidance for the medical professionals caring for people with the virus.
 - For knowledge, wisdom, and blessing for the medical researchers and scientists doing research to combat the virus.

- For Christians and churches to be Christ-like, powerful, and faithful servants to our people and communities during this time.
- For provision and blessing for those affected economically by the virus.
- For safety and blessing on missionaries around the world.
- For God to be glorified and the Gospel of Christ to be advanced in the midst of the difficult and trying challenges of these days.

When the wonderful day comes that this threat begins to subside and we can gather back together to worship, grow, and fellowship at church, let's prepare by remembering and practicing some basic guidelines for safer face-to-face gatherings. These include:

1. If you are not feeling well, or have traveled on cruises, overseas, or in infected areas, do not come to church for 14 days until you are adequately able to assess your health status.
2. If you are in the high-risk groups – those over 60, young children, those with weakened immune systems, those battling illness, those taking medical treatments, and those overcoming medical procedures – please consider staying home for your safety until the threat totally subsides.
3. Suspend handshakes and hugs in this period, and practice “social distancing” in church seating and interaction. I've been doing a lot of waving and imaginary high-fives lately!
4. Instead of passing the offering plates during the offertory, let's station ushers with plates at the doors as people enter and leave the worship services to collect weekly offerings.
5. Use hand sanitizer.
6. Stop in the bathrooms and wash your hands during your time at church.
7. Make sure that custodians and cleaning crews are taking extra care in thorough cleaning throughout the church buildings.

I am praying with you that these new arrangements will be as temporary as possible, but at this point these are important considerations. Your church staff and leadership have done a wonderful job in trying to navigate the quickly changing situation we have all found ourselves in, and I appreciate them so much for their faithful service and leadership. Please encourage and support them and continue to pray for them during these difficult times. Also remember that Easter is quickly approaching and we do not need to let COVID-19 overshadow the glory and celebration of Jesus Christ and His life, death, and resurrection that provides salvation and transformation for sinners like us who surrender to Him in faith. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow! God bless you all and you are in our prayers.

For God's Glory,

John Pace, Psalm 46