

Greetings Louisiana Baptists,

Whether you believe that decisions regarding the Coronavirus, COVID-19, are disproportionate to the real threat or believe that not enough actions are being taken, you have to agree that these are unprecedented times. Whether we see widespread outbreak in Louisiana is yet to be known, but the likelihood we will see effects, both economic and life disruption, are almost certain.

Your state missions staff are monitoring information on a daily and even hourly basis. We have not cancelled any events as of this writing with the exception of BCM events in the New Orleans area. One of our commitments to our churches is to be a resource provider. We want to be available to our churches to provide the best information and best practices as they are released.

LifeWay has prepared a thorough, helpful, free resource that can assist you and your church to prepare in case the Corona virus spreads across the state: <https://ministrygrid.com/coronavirus>. You can also visit the government site, www.cdc.gov, for additional information.

Here are some common sense suggestions we've pulled together for your consideration:

- Have plenty of hand sanitizer and wipes available for your people.
- Consider sanitizing your preschool and children's spaces, the sanctuary and all doors/bathrooms after every service.
- Avoid your typical greeting (i.e. shaking hands).
- Instead of passing the offering plates, have ushers stationed as people exit to collect their offerings. Encourage online giving if available. If you don't offer online giving, here is a free service to get you started. NOTE, even though the service is free, there is a 2.9% swipe charge + \$.30 fee for each transaction. This is taken from the donation. [Learn more at get.tithe.ly](#).
- Leave stacks of bulletins/worship guides for people to pick up as they desire instead of someone distributing them.
- Encourage those not feeling well and the elderly to stay home.
- Facebook live is an option to stream your service/message if you feel this is best for your situation. [This article on live streaming may be helpful](#).
- Communicate regularly with your leadership and congregation.

In addition, let us share our most pressing prayer concerns with you:

- Pray for those with the virus.
- Pray for our BCMs. LSU and New Orleans area schools including Tulane, Loyola, UNO, New Orleans Seminary and Leavell College have announced the suspension of on-campus classes in favor of online instruction. Other schools will likely follow. Pray for

wisdom as we make decisions to stay connected to these students. Pray for wisdom in making decisions about pending mission trips.

- Pray for those who are currently out of the country and trying to return home.
- Pray for our leaders. There is no handbook for making the decisions they are having to make.
- Pray for our health care providers.
- Pray for those most vulnerable to virus.

Finally, let me encourage us to be patient with one another. Don't ridicule someone for a decision you might disagree with. A different decision than you might make does not mean that a person is filled with fear and not trusting God. We are all trying to make the most responsible decisions given our context and facts as we know them.

We will get to the other side of this crisis.

But for now, this is a good time to remind myself and you of my favorite Scripture. Revelation 19:6 says, "Hallelujah, the Lord God, Almighty reigns!"

No matter my circumstances, He reigns!

Praying for you,

Steve Horn
Executive Director
Louisiana Baptists