

March 13, 2020

Dear Buffat Heights:

Over the past couple of weeks, our community has begun experiencing what other Coronavirus affected communities around the world have been dealing with. There is no doubt that there is unnecessary panic and chaos as well as misinformation, all of which are causing anxiety in the lives of people in our area and in our church.

I have been reading and trying to educate myself about what our response needs to be. I have consulted not only statements and guidance from the CDC and the NIH, but doctors who have had more regular access to information about prevention and treatment.

As a church, it is our primary goal to exalt Jesus Christ and to make disciples who follow Him. The primary means of exalting Jesus is our weekly worship service. When we gather, we join our hearts and minds to sing His praises, to pray, and to submit to the Scriptures through preaching and Bible study. Our primary means of disciple-making is also in meeting together so that we can learn from our teachers what the Bible instructs us to do.

All indicators point to the spread of Covid-19 in Knoxville. Yes, I realize that most people will survive this virus once they get it. However, I also realize that it is projected to spread quickly through our community and affect a large percentage of residents of Knoxville. One major factor for us to consider is that individuals over the age of 60 and those who may be immune compromised have a much greater risk of suffering serious and sometimes fatal complications due to this virus.

After prayer and seeking wisdom from leaders in our congregation and doctors who we trust, I have decided to transition our worship services to our online platforms, Facebook and our webpage. We will have worship available online this Sunday morning at 9:30, as we already do. Additionally, we will be providing online content for our children and students throughout the week.

Until we again meet together, please double your efforts to pray and read the Scriptures each day. Check in on your neighbors as well as your church family. If you know of a family or individual who is in need, please let one of the church staff know. We are still the body of Christ, even if we are not gathered in the same room.

Please utilize our online giving option at www.buffatheights.org/give . You can also mail in your tithe or drop it off at the church during normal hours (Mon-Thurs, 8:30-3pm.) Even when we don't meet together, the bills still come, so please maintain your financial support and give extra if you can, it will help to make up for those who cannot give.

This decision was not made easily, in fact, I struggled to seek what is best for our church, and for the larger community of Knoxville. Worshipping together is still vital to our existence as a church, but for now, we will worship together but from separate locations. Soon, we will gather again in person, lifting high the name of Jesus through preaching and song.

Allow Christ to rule your heart and seek to share Christ as you talk about the events of each day: whether in person, by phone, or by digital means. May God be glorified through this!

In HIS grip,

Dave Thomas