

March 13, 2020

Blessings and grace to you! Dawn and I are praying for all of you and appreciate all of you *so much!* We are constantly amazed at the level of grace and generosity that is extended here in Red Bluff and we are so proud to be a part of this church and community!

For the past few days we've been thinking and praying a lot about how to best respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We've also been reading and watching videos from scientists and leaders from around the world. In light of where things are at today (Friday, March 13), I wanted to share the plan that our leadership and Board has for the Vineyard in order to be as prepared as we can.

First, **we don't want you to feel *any* obligation to attend the Vineyard or *any other* public events!** If you have health concerns, are vulnerable, or at high risk of contracting the virus, we want you to use wisdom and refrain from putting yourself into any situations that could compromise your health. Join us on our [Facebook page](#) as we live-stream our services. Take care of yourself and use wisdom. There is no shame or condemnation for being smart!

Second, **we plan on having services *this Sunday (March 15)*, at both 9 and 11am.** Because we have two services, our gatherings are typically under 250 people. Additionally, we're going to great lengths to ensure that our environment is as safe and as sanitized as ever, including:

- We are disinfecting all doors and areas where people are before and after all services.
- Hand soap is available in all bathrooms.
- Hand sanitizers are available in all bathrooms and throughout the rest of the building.
- Vineyard Kids classrooms are deep-cleaned weekly and wiped down after every service.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes in the Vineyard Kids lobby at our check-in station.

You can help us by:

- Using good hand-washing practices and use hand sanitizer.
- Limiting physical contact with other people (rather than hug or shake hands, wave!)
- Continuing to pray, [to give generously to the work of the church](#), and to care for one another.

Third, **in the event that things change and we end up no longer hosting worship services *in person*, we are prepared to live-stream our service and provide digital content via our social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#)).** This will hopefully help us stay connected as well as growing in our relationship with God.

Fourth, in the event that there are school closures in Red Bluff, or other community impacting issues, **our #LoveRedBluff team is considering ways in which we can love our city well**, including providing meals for children, etc. Stay tuned to our social media platforms for more information.

Fifth, **we are cancelling tomorrow's Men's Breakfast and our Adult Bowling event**. We'll be issuing full refunds and you won't have to do anything to initiate that.

I know that many of you may have a variety of feelings right now and I want you to know that Dawn and I, along with hundreds of other people in our church, are praying for you and for this entire situation! If you need to talk, please reach out to us. While it's perfectly normal to have concerns and questions, I do want to encourage you trust God and take comfort in Christ. The Bible teaches us that God loves us (John 3:16) and that we have no reason to fear (Psalm 23:4; Matthew 6:34; Romans 8:38-39). I think it's also very important to remember the hope that we have and to extend love and grace to one another.

Followers of Jesus have long expressed risk-taking compassion and love alongside wisdom and discernment. We must not participate in racism or xenophobia but must continue to see all human beings as created in the image of God and deeply loved by Jesus. One of the most profound truths from history is that during the Roman Empire's numerous dealings with plagues, Christianity exploded due to the way that Christians trusted God and did not succumb to fear, while also embracing the sick and extending love to the world around them. As the plague spread, the Roman government would place the sick outside of the city gates for people to die on their own but it was the Christians who would go out and take care of the sick and pray for the sick (many experienced miraculous healing). Roman citizens were so impacted by these acts of kindness, and in watching Christians keep faith and hope, that thousands upon thousands of people turned to Jesus (see [The Rise of Christianity](#), chapter 4, "Epidemics, Networks, and Conversion"). Every situation we find ourselves in is a remarkable opportunity to glorify God and bless people. So keep your eyes on Jesus, use wisdom and discernment as you live your life, and continue to live your faith out.

We love you and we are praying for you and if you need anything, [please let us know](#). We love you all!

Dawn and Luke Geraty

Stay informed:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](#)

[California Department of Public Health.](#)