

First Baptist Church of Ellijay
Statement Regarding the Corona Virus
3-16-20

First Baptist Church of Ellijay Family,

Based on current information from the CDC, FEMA, the governor's office, and local authorities, our church's safety advisory team has recommended that we discontinue all FBC activities for 2 weeks. We will discontinue Sunday morning worship and Wednesday night activities, as well as all other meetings and activities. The team will reevaluate the situation at the end of 2 weeks and make future decisions at that time.

Please know that this decision was not made lightly. Although the risk for exposure seems low at this time and there are no confirmed cases of the corona virus in Gilmer County, the team is very conscience of our need to take care of our church family, especially our large at-risk senior adult population, as well as our greater community. The state of Georgia is asking faith-based groups to voluntarily assist in "flattening the curve" of exposure rate by cancelling group meetings – especially meetings greater than 50 people.

During this time the building will be closed to allow us to perform a total deep cleaning of the entire facility, top to bottom. However, the staff will continue to work, the office will be staffed during regular office hours, and ministry will continue. Our ministers and staff are working to find creative ways to meet the needs of our church family. We will be ready to live-stream our service on Sunday, and we are working on ways for Sunday school and Bible study groups to continue to grow and connect together. We are also working on ways to meet the needs of the those who need to stay at home during this time, whether that means making a grocery run for a stay-at-home widow or going to pick up medication for someone who is not comfortable going out in public. We are a family, and we will find ways to continue to care for our own!

How can you help?

- Pray! For the safety and protection of our church family and community.
- Call the church office or a staff member to let us know of needs that arise in our church family.
- Find creative ways to show love to those in your circle – make a phone call, send a card, order groceries for someone on-line.
- Continue to faithfully give. The work of our church will continue with our support of missions, ministries, our staff, and the general operating expenses during this time. You can continue your financial support through online giving, bill pay, or by mailing your contributions directly to the church.

We will continue to communicate with you as decisions and plans are made. We find ourselves in unprecedented, unsettling times. But none of this is a surprise to God. As Psalm 31: 15 says, our times are in His hands. We will get through this in the strength of God and by relying on each other.

Psalm 91:1-2 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

We love you!

FBC Ellijay Ministers and Staff

FBC Safety Advisory Team:

Edward Lacey (Ellijay Police Chief, Administrative Committee)

Marcie Penland (nurse, staff, preschool director)

Josh Moyers (Associate Pastor)

John Call (Gilmer County Schools)

Doug Moore (nurse)

Skeeter Schuessler (deacon chair)

Ken Cowen (deacon, retired city manager)

LeeAnn Cowen (personnel chair)

Laura Sharp (staff)

Consultant: Larry Alonzo with the CDC