

Dear Church Family,

What a privilege God granted me when I became your interim pastor. None of us could have known what we would face together with the coming of the Coronavirus. However, I can assure you that this did not catch our Great God off guard. He was, is, and always will be in complete control.

Concerning our incomparable Lord Jesus Paul wrote, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." (Colossians 1:16-20)

In these difficult days, I want you to know that Jesus is the glue of the galaxy. He is the creator and sustainer of all things and all things will come to their conclusion at His command. He is the one who is holding things together, not man.

The Executive-Director, Treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board has asked us to do three things. **First, focus on your faith and not your fears.** 2 Timothy 1:7 teaches us that, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

**Second, practice prayer not panic.** When tough times come, keep your chin up and your knees down and pray! We are to pray about everything. Ask the Lord to stop the spread of this virus. Ask God to bless and heal those infected with the virus and ask God to bless our pastors and churches across Mississippi. This is certainly uncharted territory and many pastors are struggling to figure out the best way to move forward.

**Finally, hope in Heaven and not in health.** We should all strive to live healthy and maintain good health so that we can be all we should be for the Lord. However, this world is not our home, we are simply passing through on our way home to Heaven. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:20)

I want to thank our church staff and deacons for all they have done and are doing to help us move forward. Right now, we think it is best for all to follow the guidance of our President and health care professionals and not subject anyone to this harmful and potentially deadly virus. Therefore, we will not be having any church activities or services March 22<sup>nd</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday evening services are cancelled. We will reevaluate the situation next week and hopefully can return to a full schedule in April. We will let you know just as quickly as we can, I promise!

The plan is to stream live services via Facebook this Sunday morning and next Sunday morning. I will be at the church along with Bro. Randy, Colton, and a few musicians (no more than 10) and we will conduct service just as if we had a full house. Please do not come to the church but watch on your phone or other device and worship with us in this way. I am grateful we have such technology available.

Even though we are not meeting as a body of believers you understand that bills must be paid. Please remain faithful in giving. You can utilize the online giving capability by visiting our church website [fbcnewton.org](http://fbcnewton.org) or you can download the EASYTITHE app to your phone or other smart device and give via the app. Right now Ashley is in the office and you can mail your tithe or drop it off at the office.

I love you church! Please use common sense and discretion but let us believe that God is in control and though things may be difficult for everyone right now, God is still on His Throne! Trust Him, obey Him, live for Him and be a blessing to those around you. Check on the elderly and your neighbors and let us be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Finally, let the words of Isaiah the prophet speak to your heart, "Why would you ever complain, O Jacob, or, whine, Israel, saying, "God has lost track of me. He doesn't care what happens to me". Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening? God doesn't come and go. God lasts. He's Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath. And he knows everything, inside and out. He energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles. They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind." (Isaiah 40:27-31 – The Message)

Because HE Lives,  
Rev. Rick Blythe