

I wanted to provide a brief update on where we are at in organizing a concerted response to what appears to lie ahead.

As of today (3/20), Tennessee reports 228 cases. This is an increase of 74 from the previous day and if we follow other state and country trajectories, we should begin to see a doubling occur for the next several days unless these early isolation precautions work. There are still no cases reported for Madison County, but as other West Tennessee counties begin to report cases, we should begin to see this here, too. If you wish to follow this yourself it is updated at 2pm every day and you can see the numbers, counties, and age ranges of infected people here:

<https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>

The elders and the Health Crisis Response Team is preparing and have several fronts we are acting on so we can make sure our family is taken care of during this time.

The first objective is to make sure our high risk members are taken care of properly. Anyone 65 and up is automatically included in this category. The office staff is trying to identify others not in this age group who may be considered high risk that need to stay home. If you meet the criteria identified in my earlier letter, please notify the office so you can be included for assistance during this time.

This program will go by the name of “My Senior’s Keeper” just because the vast majority of them will be those in our most cherished age group. Any of you not in the high risk group will need to pitch in to “adopt” someone. If we have multi-generational families, we expect you to take care of your own first and if we have extra volunteers, we will provide your loved ones with another source of help if needed.

If you fall into the “My Senior’s Keeper” group. You will be contacted by your “adoptive” family. They will do grocery shopping for you and run any other essential errands for you. We want you to stay home during this time to protect yourself and if Tennessee undergoes

a “lock-down” as other states are beginning to do, you don’t need to be out in that environment. Please allow us to take care of you. You taught us when we were little and watched over us as we grew! We owe you one! More instructions on this program will follow.

As you know we are doing church differently and that involves the use of a computer. Jackson Clinic and other local medical providers are rapidly switching over to Telehealth which involves some set-up to make this work. Some of our family computer gurus are working behind the scenes to provide you with information on how to do both of these and your adoptive family will also be available to help you get on-line for these services so you are connected for your spiritual and physical needs.

We are exploring various other ideas that will be launched in the coming days/weeks based on how long this last and how severe it gets. As an intensive care physician, I always have to think worst case scenario, plan for that, and make sure multiple contingency plans are in place. Our church is treating this the same way and you should know you will be taken care of during this time.

I do have one request from everyone, if you have an idea for something that needs to be done and a need that should be met, please let us know. Send the ideas to Danny and we will work to see if it is feasible and doesn’t replicate something else in place. We need all hands on deck for this and want your gifts and talents to be used.

In closing, I was reading the letter Martin Luther wrote in 1527 earlier this week. They were dealing with the Bubonic plague where he lived in Germany at that time. It is a long letter, but quite interesting and pertinent to us in many ways. You can find it here:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>

Several things stood out to me, but especially this:

"Use medicine; take potions which can help you; fumigate house, yard, and street; shun persons and places wherever your neighbor does not need your presence or has recovered, and act like a man who wants to help put out the burning city. What else is the epidemic but a fire which instead of consuming wood and straw devours life and body? You ought to think this way: "Very well, by God's decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

Stay healthy and God bless,

Scott

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment." - 2 Timothy 1:7