

Dear Redeemer West Side Church Family,

As we're sure you are aware, there have been confirmed cases for COVID-19 (coronavirus) in our area. Redeemer takes the health and welfare of our church family seriously.

We are making some adjustments to elements of our Sunday services, but at this point are not canceling services. We are monitoring reports from the New York City Department of Public Health and will continue to follow their recommendations for our area. Know that we are making the necessary adjustments and precautions to our services. We will update you as the situation changes, especially if schools close or public gatherings are banned.

The approach we are taking is not driven by fear, but by our care and commitment to the safety and well being of our church, neighbors and city. As Christians, our hope is in our Lord and therefore we can in faith steward our bodies wisely, serve one another, and love our neighbors.

Therefore our approach is in three areas: **Safety, Care and Mission.**

## **SAFETY**

### *Sunday Service Adjustments*

- We remind everyone to strictly follow recommended guidelines for illness. Adults and children should not attend if they have any symptoms or fever within the previous 48 hours.
- If anyone has traveled to a region affected or has contact with potentially affected people, stay away from crowds for two weeks.
- During the greeting, please greet your friends and neighbors, but refrain from shaking hands. A friendly wave will do.
- We will cancel food for coffee hour (large groan from all children but it's for food safety). In addition, our ops team will wear gloves when they serve coffee.
- Our operations crew will frequently disinfect surfaces such as doorknobs, banisters or elevator buttons on Sundays.
- Children's hands will be washed as they enter classrooms.
- Staff and volunteer teams will wash their hands frequently and stay home if they are sick.
- Offering plates will be relocated to the front door after service so you don't need to pass them down the row. Remember, you can also [give online](#).
- To help prevent the potential spread of germs, [download the Redeemer App](#) to access the bulletin and Connect
- Finally... if the NY Department of Health issues other directives or shutdowns, Redeemer West Side will immediately comply and notify you.

*What You Can Do to Protect Yourself and Your Church Family*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus include:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues and throw it away immediately.
- Stay home if you are feeling ill or traveled to infected areas.
- Stay 3-6 feet away from infected persons.

## **CARE**

We're sharing some ideas to encourage you to be informed in order to care for each other.

- Don't panic, but prepare. Stay informed and thoughtfully consider how you might wisely prepare for this new health reality.
- Check in on friends, neighbors, co-workers and others. Offer care, encouragement and supplies to anyone shut in or affected.
- Remember to talk about your worries and concerns, but do not to be overwhelmed or driven by them. God loves his children even in the midst of suffering. Pray each day with our [daily prayer guides](#), or listen to sermons on fear such as this one from the Gospel in Life [podcast](#).
- Reject anxiety even as there is growing concern and heightened awareness around the way this particular virus can spread.
- Proactively learn about what the risks are and are not at this point. We've included links below to help you monitor the illness.
- Practice smart hygiene and help prevent the spread of germs for the sake of the wider community and public health.

## **MISSION**

- Consider how this illness might impact you, your family, and your community, including those without access to health care or with weakened immune systems or respiratory problems.
- In addition, many of the poorest in our city will be affected by economic hardship if businesses shut down or they cannot travel to work. Collaborate with mission agencies for support.
- As your neighbors express fear or confusion, this can be an opportunity to offer encouragement in the Lord. Some verses to refer to include: Isaiah 40:31, Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 8:38-39, Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 34:4 and the well-known Psalm 23.

It is also wise to continue to listen to medical professionals and accurately adjust behavior to match the risk and reality of our public health so that we do not race ahead or contribute to panic, fear, or stockpiling, all of which damage public health in the long run.

## **RESOURCES**

Link for [facts about COVID-19 from the CDC](#)

Link for [up to date information in our area from the NYC Department of Health](#)

Check our social media for further updates related to Redeemer West Side. Please continue to keep the communities impacted by this illness in your prayers.

Sincerely,  
David Bisgrove