

March 17, 2020

To the New Salem Church Family,

Earlier this evening I met with our deacon body along with Bro. Tim and Bro. Joe for the sole purpose of discussing how our church would respond to the COVID-19 threat. Let me begin by saying how thankful I am for the wisdom and the counsel that was afforded to me tonight. I am blessed to be able serve you alongside these men. With the welfare of both our church family and the entire community in mind, you need to know that we are taking this risk seriously.

After prayerful thought and conversation, our leadership has made the collective decision to cancel all activities at New Salem for the next 3 weeks. This will include both services on Sunday, all Wednesday night youth and children's activities and all small groups. This will also include our Easter Egg hunt scheduled for April the 11th. Our hope is to come together on Easter Sunday (April 12th) in celebration of our Lord's victory over death, hell and the grave.

We did not make this decision out of fear, but out of love and deep concern for the common good. I borrowed a line from a fellow pastor and told your leadership team tonight that if we over react, then in a month we will say we over reacted. If we do nothing and someone in our church becomes infected, we will always wonder if we could have done more.

Though we won't be gathering for worship in person, I encourage you to gather with us for livestream events on **Sundays at 11am and a live Bible study each **Wednesday evening at 7pm**.**

To watch the Sunday morning service online, simply visit the church's website at newsalemchurch.net. On the front page, simply click on the button that says "Watch Us Live" to view our Youtube channel where you can not only watch us live, but also watch archived services.

A second option is visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/newsalemtn/>. If you will *Like us* and follow us on Facebook, you will receive an alert when we are about to go live.

Although our building may be closed, we are determined that ministry will continue. Your deacons, associate pastors and myself are always available by phone as needed. We will be diligent to stay alert to further developments and recommendations from the CDC and other government officials and regroup as needed to evaluate plans for future events.

In the meantime, we encourage you to stay in contact with each other and spend much time with God. Be in prayer for those in our church family, for our local and national leaders, and those across the country and the globe that are impacted by the spread of the Coronavirus.

Keep an eye on your social media and an ear out for updates via the church's call system for updates over the coming days.

We're here for you... and we look forward to gathering together again soon.

"Because He Lives, I can face tomorrow..."

In HIM,
Pastor Ponder