



March 14, 2020

Friends and Family of The River Church,

In response to the COVID-19, I want to take a few moments to share my thoughts and encourage you to join together, as the church, to share love, concern, faith and reassurance as we journey together in uncertain times.

This Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, ***we will have services*** as planned at The River.

- 10AM Sunday Morning Service
- 6PM-7PM Downpour, a time of worship and prayer.

The sermon will be recorded and made available online in a reasonable time. **The service *will not be livestreamed*.** I know this is a direction many churches are going, and much of the culture around us is going, but this medium is not for us. For the sake of brevity, I will not drive deeper into this at this time.

Our volunteers and I have gone through our facility to clean and disinfect bathrooms, surfaces and doorknobs. We have monitored recommendations by credible media sources, including information from the City of Haverhill and the Center for Disease Control. (See links below)

Together, we will continue to maintain a safe environment that is conducive to worship and prayer.

To this end, we should not allow fear and public panic to determine the direction of the church. At the same time, I encourage everyone to pray and act according to conscience.

**Some commonsense actions offered in this time:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.  
***Stay home if you are not feeling well, or if your immune system is compromised.***

- Cover your mouth and nose with your forearm when coughing and sneezing. If possible, move away from others. Practice courtesy by keeping a safe distance.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds at a time. Use soap and water when possible.
- If no soap and water are available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol. We have plenty.
- For the next several months, use your faith and wisdom, but consider giving your friends a wave or elbow bump rather than shaking hands or hugging one another.

**Coronavirus Information:**

[www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus).

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)

**FACT SHEETS**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/english-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-0/download>

Spanish Version:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/spanish-nuevo-coronavirus-2019-covid-19-0/download>

In response to the anticipated question, “Why is The River Open when other churches have canceled or are moving to alternative means of fellowship?”:

I believe there is a fervency of faith that we are called to. The church is to be the Church in times of crisis. We should pull together in worship and prayer, as we engage God and intercede for the power of God to end this pandemic, shield our vulnerable, and restore this nation to strength and health.

Media reports that the Governor has declared a State of Emergency. The President has declared a National Emergency. What is underreported is that the President has also called tomorrow, March 15<sup>th</sup>, to be a National Day of Prayer.

***Please, if you are not well or have a compromised immune system, stay home. If you are well, please join us for prayer and worship, exercising faith, wisdom, love and courtesy.***

Lastly, please look out for friends and neighbors who may need to be looked in on, particularly the elderly, the ill and the alone.

Love and Blessings,  
Pastor David



**Pastor David Braxton**

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