**Silver Creek Baptist Church**

**Response to COVID-19**

COVID-19 has pushed us all into unprecedented days. Many of us do not know what to make the COVID-19 pandemic, but we can trust in our God. As the people of God, we should strive to strike a balance between two extremes. On one extreme, some people are dismissing the seriousness of this pandemic. On the other extreme, some people are fostering hysteria and fear. As Christians, we must stand between these extremes, loving God and loving our neighbor while taking the proper precautions against COVID-19 without inciting or giving place to fear. To the best of our understanding, the seriousness of this virus relates to how easy and how fast it spreads. The purpose of this document is to put into place a plan related to how our church will respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Phase 1: Confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in SW Mississippi*

* **Communicate to membership:**
  + **Do not fear.** God did not give us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. 1:7).
  + **Be smart.** While some people do not believe COVID-19 is serious, others do. Whichever group our family falls within, we cannot deny the unprecedented reaction of those across our nation and in the world as a whole. Therefore, we urge each member to follow their own convictions related to their own health. If you consider yourself to be at-risk, then please take the precautions you and your doctor feel necessary. We do not want you to feel guilty for not coming to church due to COVID-19. We understand and encourage you to guard yourself and your family. If you do not feel safe coming to church, remember that we broadcast our sermons through Facebook Live. We encourage you to login to Facebook, like the SCBC Facebook page, and join us live on Sundays!
  + **Be clean personally.** Over and over again, we have heard health officials encourage good hygiene. We want to echo that call:
    - Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds: especially after sneezing or coughing, after coming in contact with someone who exhibits flu-like symptoms, and before eating.
    - Use hand sanitizer.
    - Try not to touch your face.
    - Do not hug or shake hands with other people. Simply wave, say hello, and trust that others understand.
    - Limit your handling of public surfaces (e.g. doorknobs and pew backs).
  + **Be assured.** We do not yet know all of the impacts of this pandemic. Two things we do know. First, the situation is changing quickly and multiple times daily. Second, this pandemic is causing us to traverse some uncharted waters. Therefore, we want you to know that we are taking the CDC-recommended precautions to help eliminate the spread of COVID-19. We want you to know that we are monitoring and reassessing the situation constantly. We have a plan in place, but that plan may change. We will communicate with you as much as possible. We want you to know that we believe that the church should meet when possible, but at the same time we do not feel that at-risk people should take unnecessary risks.
* **Extra sanitary precautions**
  + **Be clean corporately.** We want to do everything we can do to make the church gathering as safe as possible.
    - Make hand sanitizer available at all entrances and in all SS classrooms.
    - Wipe down public surfaces with disinfectant prior to and following services.
    - Discourage physical contact and eating together at church.

*Phase 2: Confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in Pike or Walthall county*

* **Suspend Auxiliary Services and Gatherings** (in addition to following phase 1 protocols)
  + Sunday Morning Worship Only
  + Sunday School, Sunday Evening, and Wednesday Evening services suspended.
  + All other ministries suspended (Kids Klub, Choir, Visitation, Feed My Sheep, ect.)
  + Tithes and offerings to be placed in basket while exiting church to keep from passing plates (research online giving)
  + Resumption of normal activities after 14 days and reassess as needed
  + Video devotions sent out via Facebook twice per week
* **Foster a more sanitary environment** (becoming more widespread)
  + Consider holding services in Fellowship Hall due to ease of cleaning and sanitizing.
  + All other areas to be sanitized and closed.

*Phase 3: Confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis with a recent attendee at SCBC*

* **Suspend all activities including Sunday Morning Worship**
  + This suspension will last one Sunday at a time and be reassessed as needed
  + One weekly sermon will be broadcast via Facebook Live along with video devotions weekly
  + Online giving enacted

Sunday, March 15, 2020. Leaders across the nation have called for this day to be a day of prayer focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. As of today, March 12, we are still holding services as normal. When we meet Sunday, remember to limit physical contact as much as possible while washing and sanitizing your hands frequently. Remember, God is faithful. God is loving. God is all powerful. Although he does not promise that we will never get sick, he does promise to walk with us and even carry us through the darkest of days. Trust God during this season. In addition, be on the lookout for ways our church can minister to our community during the midst of this crisis. Be assured of my love and my prayers for you all.