

*Red indicates an important update to this report

UPDATE: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Amidst concerns surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19), we want to let you know how First Baptist Church is responding. Our leadership team is carefully and continually monitoring this situation. As information evolves, this page is available for you to receive answers to commonly asked questions. We are committed to doing everything we can to provide a safe environment for our church family and the surrounding community.

ARE WE HAVING SERVICES AT FBC?

No. We are canceling all church events, services, and activities until the pandemic subsides. Your physical welfare is just as important to us as your spiritual welfare. We are continually monitoring the situation and will keep you informed through our website.

Our President has asked, not legally required, that we not meet in groups larger than ten people to slow down the spread of the virus. In deference to the President of the United States, we, along with other churches, are honoring his request.

There is no need to panic. This is the time to act wisely and by faith.

HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED TO FBC?

As a church family, we must not forsake *"the assembling of ourselves together"* mandate found in Hebrews 10:25. In place of meeting at the church on Sunday, we ask that you visit the church's website each Sunday. Here's what you will find.

A sermon from the senior pastor

A Sunday School lesson from our education pastor

A worship moment with our worship pastor

Check social media for inspiring thoughts from our student pastor

Updates on church programming and scheduling

The pastors will also provide links on our website, so you and your family can continue your spiritual journey by worshipping, studying, and growing in Christ. Just click on the ministry that interests you to find their links.

Keep in mind; the church provides you at no cost, access to Right Now Media, which has thousands of resources for every spiritual need. If you are part of a Sunday Morning Bible Class, we ask that you continue reading and studying the weekly lesson.

Although the church offices will be open, we ask you not to come to the church office. We will gladly meet with you over the phone, by email, and through texts.

WHAT IF I NEED PASTORAL CARE?

We care deeply about the needs of our congregation. Because most hospitals, surgery centers, and nursing homes are limiting visitation to just those receiving medical attention, we are honored to counsel and pray with you over the phone, by text, or email. We ask that you, please continue sharing your needs and prayer requests with us.

You can reach us by calling 903.693.3569. You can also email us at prayer@firstbaptistcarthage.com.

HOW DO I GIVE MY TITHE?

We recognize the importance of obeying the biblical command to bring our tithes to the Lord's House (Malachi 3:10). We need you to continue tithing because missionaries,

ministries, and ministers rely on your contributions. No doubt, many in our church will also be negatively impacted by the pandemic, and thus, need our help.

Because we will endeavor to keep the church office open, you can mail your tithe to the address below, or simply drop it off through the mail slot on the office door. You can also arrange to have your tithe directly deposited by your bank. Although we don't offer it at this time, we are working on providing online giving. As soon as we have it in operation, we will let you know.

First Baptist Church
P.O. Box 548
Carthage, TX 75633

WHAT ABOUT OUR CHURCH STAFF?

We are taking precautions to keep all of your church staff healthy. As a result, we have adopted the following guidelines.

1. All staff must frequently wash their hands and avoid any unnecessary touching of their faces.
2. All staff should avoid any skin-to-skin contact with members and guests (that is, no handshakes or hugs).
3. The janitorial staff will increase the overall cleaning and disinfecting practices without our buildings.
4. If a staff member feels sick, we request that he stays home.
5. All staff should refrain from visiting the hospitals, nursing homes, and any gathering of more than ten people. **Because we care about the welfare of our congregation, we will "visit" people by phone, texts, and email.**

HOW CAN I BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes respiratory illness — an infection of the airways and lungs. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus and is part of the same family of coronaviruses that includes the common cold. The coronavirus outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Since then, the virus has spread to other countries.

The most common early symptoms appear between 2 and 14 days after infection. Symptoms can be mild to severe. They include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop severe illness. People with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention. Most people recover from the disease without needing special treatment.

Like many other viruses, the coronavirus (COVID-19) seems to spread from person-to-person through a cough, sneeze, or kiss. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the risk in the U.S. is still low. They will update this status regularly on their website. You can also find more information from the following websites.

World Health Organization: www.who.int

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

Texas Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.texas.gov

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND SPIRITUALLY TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is yet one more reminder that we live in a fallen world of sickness, sin, suffering, and death. Ultimately, none of us are immune to any of these things. But that's why the gospel is such good news. God has not left us alone in this world of sickness, sin, suffering, and death. He has come to us in the person of Jesus.

The most important news is that Jesus lived a life with no sin, died on a cross to pay the price for our sin, and rose from the grave in victory over sin and death. Anyone who turns from his sin and trusts in Jesus will be forgiven of all his sin and restored to relationship with God forever. That means that through Jesus, we never have to fear sickness or death because we know we have eternal life with God.

If you do not know that you have eternal life with God, we urge you to put your faith in Jesus. And if you do know that you have eternal life with God, we urge you to share your faith in Jesus with others. Times like these remind us all of the fragility of life and the inevitability of death. So, let's spread the news that death has been defeated, and eternal life is available to all who trust in Jesus.

In addition to trusting in Jesus and sharing about Jesus with others, here are some other ways you can respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Trust in God as the loving, sovereign Creator and Sustainer of life upon whom we all depend.
- Pray for mercy for the sick, strength for doctors, insight for researchers, and wisdom for officials.
- Look for opportunities to love and care for others, whether they are sick, isolated, marginalized, poor, or oppressed.
- Stay closely connected to the church family. Participate in worship gatherings online.
- Continue to give financial offerings faithfully, so the ministry of the church thrives all the more amid difficult days.
- Reflect often on the brevity of life, the urgency of eternity, and the beauty of the gospel.