

March 14, 2020

Hello Citizens family,

As we hear and learn more about the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the news, we want to be in communication with you about the steps we are taking to help prevent the spread of the illness and how we are handling this situation as a church.

Firstly, a quick word of encouragement for all of us - Because of Jesus, when there is a divergence of opinions and news swirling around, we can rest in our God. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7 that "we have not been given a spirit of fear but of love, wisdom and sound mind." We serve a really big God. As always, if you or your family are sick and need prayer, our elders and I would love to know so we can be praying for you.

What we are doing:

- For the next few weeks, as we continually assess the situation around us, **we will not be meeting for Sunday Celebration at The Well, effective March 15th**. We will leave it up to each village to decide if and when they will meet (whether in person or online), as each village is unique in its makeup and rhythms. Your village leaders will be reaching out to you soon to discuss your village's plan. If you are not involved in a village and would like to connect with one through this time, text our Citizens online number (330) 427-3881 and we can connect you to a village.
 - Our heart behind not gathering is our heart to care well for our community. Jesus teaches us first off to love him above all, and to secondly love our neighbor as ourselves. We will not meet as a large gathering in an effort to love the most vulnerable of our neighbors and help slow the spread of the virus. This was also a recommendation of the State of Ohio that large gatherings over 100 should not meet over the next few weeks.
 - Although we don't specifically know how long not gathering on Sundays will last, we will keep you up to date on when we will come back together for Celebration on a Sunday morning.
- **Each weekend we will live stream or post a sermon/discussion on our social media/website that will allow people to continue weekly hearing the Word and allow villages to discuss.** You can head to citizensakron.com to connect to the live stream or post.
- We will continue to seek out ways to be a neighborhood church and love our neighbors in tangible ways during this time. As we find ways, we will let you know how you can help.
- We are vigilantly keeping up to date on CDC and ODH recommendations.

- When we are able to return to gathering together, we will have increased cleanliness and disinfection in our facility.
 - Additionally, we will be switching our communion style from intinction to individualized prewrapped cups that contain prewrapped wafers

What you can do:

- Be wise and have a sound mind
 - Follow CDC recommendations, including frequent hand washing, limiting handshaking and touching, covering your coughs and sneezes, and avoiding touching your face
 - Stay home if you or a family member is sick. It doesn't make you less spiritual if you stay home. You're actually loving those around you well by not exposing them to germs.
- Make decisions with your family in regard to Citizens village rhythms and to Celebration when we return together. You may choose to do what is best and wise for your family in this time of uncertainty.
- **Pray** – for the people in our city who have already been affected by the coronavirus (physically and mentally), and for the people who will be affected in various ways. Also, be praying for you and your family and for us as a church community to continue in tangible way to love our neighbors through this time.

Helpful resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/>

If you have any questions, please contact us.

Blessings,

James Talbert

Lead Pastor at Citizens Akron