



2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Hi everyone! Well, here we are in our second week of our “at home order”. I don’t know about you, but as strange as it sounds, our days are starting to feel more normal now. I think we’re slowly coming out of the initial period of chaos into developing some weekly rhythms and routines.

I have been reminded a lot in the last weeks that while the world is spinning in uncertainty and upheaval, God is not. 2nd Corinthians 4:18 tells us to “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” which means we decidedly choose to see this current season through God’s eyes and with an eternal perspective. This literally changes everything.

We realize that in God’s sovereignty, He knew about this global pandemic before time began (let that roll around for a minute ☺). He was not caught off guard nor bamboozled by it. As we know from Scripture, God works all things out for His ultimate purposes and glory, even global pandemics.

Secondly, from a biblical perspective, nothing has changed. God is still God, the Bible is still true, people still need the gospel and our call to go make disciples has not been revoked. The church may have shifted, but our mission and vision stays the same. As someone said to me last week, it’s good to remember that the Holy Spirit doesn’t have COVID-19 and is not under a “stay at home” order. So let’s not act like He does, nor put God and the church on the shelf for a season. Let’s remember our calling and the truth that the gates of hell, nor COVID-19, will stop God’s purposes and plans.

Speaking of rhythms and routines, I wanted you to know where we’re at as a church. Our goal over the last month has been to stabilize; to plug the holes in the boat so we don’t sink. We have plugged a lot of holes, found resources, innovated, improvised, leveraged systems and structures and launched new digital tools. Thank you to a great team of people that made this all happen!

We are now moving into a normalizing phase as we recognize two things; our need for consistent community and the reality that this pandemic may likely last into the summer. We have hunkered down for a season to gather our bearings and find our footing, but as missionaries who follow Jesus, we can’t stay in this place. We must begin to normalize this new reality with weekly and monthly rhythms, practices, online events and habits. We can do this not because we have the ability, but because Jesus has called us to this and we have the Holy Spirit inside of us (Romans 8:11). Let’s not forget our calling but run headlong into the mission of God!

As in weeks past, please see below for details on our continued response.

Current Situation

As a reminder, Governor Inslee issued a “stay at home” order on Monday, March 23rd that does the following:

- Requires every Washingtonian to stay home unless they need to pursue an essential activity
- Bans all gatherings for social, spiritual and recreational purposes
- Closes all businesses except essential businesses

This proclamation will end at midnight on April 6th, unless it has been extended. Therefore, our Sunday gatherings are cancelled through Sunday, April 5th. We will await further information after April 6th and notify you regarding the rest of April.

While our church has been observing social distancing measures, this additional restriction impacts our Sunday service. See below for more details.

Sunday Service

I found out a couple days ago that online streaming of church services is now part of Governor Inslee's "Essential Businesses" list. Hooray! This means we will return to live streaming at the sanctuary this Sunday and incorporating music. The provision allows a small number of people to gather at the church building, while observing social distancing, to stream the service.

Again, a big **THANK YOU** to those who have been helping with sound and projection over the last month. We have an amazing and skilled team of tech people.

A couple things to mention:

- Here is the link to access the live stream each Sunday moving forward;
<https://www.facebook.com/ArborHeightsCommunityChurch/>
- A reminder that last week we launched our new [AHCC YouTube Channel!](#) Thank you to Ken Winebrener for getting this going. We will begin loading sermons and other content onto this page in the weeks ahead. Also, you do not need a login to access YouTube so this is available to everyone.

Communion

This Sunday is communion Sunday. We're not going to let a pandemic stop us from taking communion! Here are the options for communion materials:

- We have put individually pre-packaged communion cups, which include a wafer, in a box behind the planter on the front steps of the church building. They will be available as of today.
- Run to the grocery store and grab some grape juice and bread
- If the above two options are not available, use whatever you have at home (bread, fishy crackers, Diet Coke, etc.) I think there's freedom right now to go with what you have at the house.

Then, have your juice and bread/cracker with you on Sunday morning. Leah will be sending out information for communion for those of you who have kids at home. I will lead us in communion at the end of the message.

Ministries

Children's & Family Ministry

As a reminder, Leah has been sending out an email with resources to parents (devotionals, videos, links, etc.). I hope you've been finding these helpful in discipling your children.

In addition, a reminder AWANA is cancelled through April 28th, starting back on May 5th. AWANA Directors and leaders are reaching out to clubbers over the next 5 weeks to help complete sections and offer assistance. If you have any questions for Leah, you can contact her at 206-854-1684 or leah@arborheights.org.

Community Groups

While all of our groups took a hiatus for the first couple weeks of this pandemic, we are now bringing them back online (literally 😊). We will be utilizing both phone and Zoom to connect with our groups. Things will obviously look a little different as we focus more heavily on community and connection. Our goal as group leaders is to keep things simple right now with a focus on Scripture and relationships. Your community group leader should be reaching out to you this week for details. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor John at john@arborheights.org.

Youth Ministry

As a reminder, Linnea is posting daily devotionals, verses and videos to our new Facebook and Instagram pages (Arbor Heights Youth). If you have any questions for Linnea, you can contact her at 315-507-1427 or linnea@arborheights.org.

ARK Preschool

ARK Preschool will be closed through April 24th to align with the Seattle School District. We will make sure and inform families before then if the closure continues. If you have specific questions about the preschool and plans, please contact our Director Loretta Kimball at 206-650-1801 or loretta@arborheights.org.

Virtual Prayer Nights

We will be doing virtual prayer nights on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm the next three weeks using Zoom. Christy Krispin will be leading us through prayer and Scripture. Below is the Zoom information:

Every week on Wed, 3 occurrence(s)

- Apr 1, 2020 07:00 PM
- Apr 8, 2020 07:00 PM
- Apr 15, 2020 07:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/201307098>

Meeting ID: 201 307 098

Phone #: 253-215-8782 US

Arbor Heights Elementary Immediate Need

AHE contacted us last Friday and requested assistance with grocery gift cards for families at the school. As many of you know, one of the byproducts of closing schools was the hardship that put on many families for childcare and food. Also, many have been laid off, had their hours cut or lost jobs. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to put our partnership with AHE into action and provide for daily needs. To help out you can:

- Mail in grocery gift cards, or a check, to the church building; 4113 SW 102nd St. Seattle, WA 98146
- Drop gift cards, or a check, off in our mailbox just to the west of the church building on 102nd.
- Give on your mobile phone through Cash App. Our name is \$ArborHeights
- Contribute through our website under "Give". You will need to call the office at 206-935-5714 to let them know your gift is for AHE grocery gift cards.

Please contact Charnell Bolger at charnellbolger@yahoo.com or 206-261-4445 with any questions.

Acts of Mercy

One of the things we want to do, while still observing the "stay at home" order, is serve our neighbors and community. Here are a couple examples of how that's being done.

- **Mask Making** – Jill Alvis is in her second week of sewing masks for health care workers, clinics, and those still working in essential businesses. She has rallied around 10 other fellow sewers who are assisting and they've currently sent out over 750 masks! Jill is using a GoFundMe account to cover the mask costs, filters and shipping. If you have a desire, and skill, to help with this effort, please contact Jill at 206-617-0110.
- **Alcohol Prep Pads** – As part of our West Seattle Church Collective (WSCC), we gathered individually packaged alcohol prep pads for nurses and health workers. These pads are what they use to sterilize people before injections. A number of health workers had run out and we were able to donate roughly 300 pads. Great job church!
- **Grocery Gift Cards** – Over the last weeks, people who have purchased grocery gift cards to help those who can't get out or in financial need. This has been a very practical way to meet tangible and immediate needs. If you would like to help in this way, please give me a call or text at 206-375-2498.
- **Do you have other ideas?** If so, text or call me at the number above. We'd love to hear them!

Events

Membership Class

A reminder we have cancelled our upcoming membership class on March 4th. If possible, we will reschedule for early summer, but most likely will just offer our normal fall class. If you registered for this class, whether online or at the Connect Desk, we will keep you registered for the next class.

Joint WSCC Good Friday Service

Our WSCC group of churches are currently putting together a pre-recorded Good Friday service that will include songs and Scripture focusing on Jesus sacrifice. More details to come next week.

Global Missions Week

Our Global Missions Week is scheduled for May 4th-10th. While we are still keeping this on the calendar, Randy Newburn, our Missions Director, is currently in conversations with our visiting missionaries, Rich & Elisa Brown. If we need to cancel this event, we are already looking at multiple videoing, streaming and recording options.

Transparency

As of April 1st, there are no confirmed cases of AHCC members contracting the virus. If any AHCC member is known to be infected with COVID-19, the church body will be notified (privacy for the individual) and appropriate action taken.

Communication

We are continuing to provide COVID-19 updates through email, our Facebook page and our website. We recently added a page to our website, called "COVID-19 Updates" that includes past updates and all future updates. The link is in a blue banner at the top of the homepage.

Benevolent Fund

As I mentioned in the last two Sundays, we are already seeing the financial impacts of COVID-19 right here in our church community. If God has provided for you during this season, and you feel called, would you please consider donating to our Benevolent Fund? We use this fund to assist those in our church who are walking through a financial difficulty. You can give through one of the four options below.

Giving

A reminder that since we will not be gathering as a church in April, and in person giving won't be available, below are the available options:

1. Mail in your check. The church address is 4113 SW 102nd St., Seattle, WA 98146
2. Set up bill pay with your bank. You can contact your bank and ask to set up bill pay with AHCC and they can assist you.
3. Give online at our website under "Give"; www.arborheights.org
4. Give on the mobile app "Cash App" (you can find it in your App Store on your phone). Our account name is "\$ArborHeights". As a reminder, there are no fees when using a debit card, for the church or you, when using this method.

Caring For the Body

An important reminder that we are heavily relying on our Elder regional structure and community groups during this time for care and connection. Please let your CG leader or regional Elder know if you need help or just someone to talk with through fears and concerns. We're here for each other!

If you missed it in our earlier communication, our Elder-led regions are broken up as follows:

Hal Kimball (North Region) – 206-898-2302; halkimball@aol.com

Randy Newburn (East Region) – 206-965-0121; rnewburn@gmail.com

Steve Klein (South Region) – 406-945-0612; snjklein55@gmail.com

John Lindow (West Region) – 206-375-2498; john@arborheights.org

Please check the Directory to see which region to you are in. You can also email our main office at info@arborheights.org with any questions or concerns.

The Gift

Hopefully you were able to join us this past Sunday as I took a break from our current sermon series to address the question, "Where is God in this pandemic?" I suggested that while we may not know exactly what God is doing in and through this trial, we can see this as a gift. Not that the pandemic itself is a gift, but this season, where we're stuck in our homes, slowed down and stripped of a lot our dependencies, is God's gift to rescue, grow and shape us. I said that God "slows us to save us."

I pray hard that out of a desire to stay busy and distracted, we don't miss what God wants to do in and through our lives. I believe that rather than a time of famine, this could be a season of abundant spiritual harvest. Will you let Him slow you to save you?

Forcibly Slowed to be Graciously Saved,

Pastor John