



2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

July 8th, 2020

Good afternoon! I pray this week finds you in grace and gratitude of all God has done, and is doing, in your life. We serve an amazing God!

As you know, we're back!! It was a surreal Sunday on June 28th to be back together as a church family. Even though we're wearing masks, physical distancing and sanitizing those praise hands, it was great to be together.

So far things have gone smoothly with two services and observing the necessary safety precautions. Thank you for honoring the guidelines and putting other people before yourself. It has been a testimony to Jesus and the work He has done in us.

Hopefully you've heard me announce it over the past two weeks, but I will be out on vacation from July 11th – 26th. I will be back in the office on July 27th. That means I won't be sending out the next COVID-19 newsletter until July 29th. I'm looking forward to some time with family, rest and rejuvenation, but will miss all of you!

As usual, please see below for our ongoing coronavirus response.

Current Situation

As I'm sure you all know, COVID-19 cases around the country have been increasing at an alarming rate. It was reported on Monday this week, just two days ago, that Washington had over 1,000 new cases. Even though King County is in Phase 2, please continue to be safe and take all necessary precautions, especially if you're in the "high risk" group (over 65 with underlying health conditions).

In addition, as of June 24th, Washington State required that everyone wear face masks in public spaces. You can read more about this in the document I attached to this email from the Washington State Department of Health. This means we are continuing to wear face masks at our Sunday service both inside and outside the building.

Given the intensity of COVID-19 spreading in the last few weeks, we are watching it closely and will let you know if we need to make any changes in our response.

Sunday Service

King County continues to remain in Phase 2 and it seems like we'll be here for a while. This has meant our church can hold indoor services with up to 25% capacity or 200 individuals, whichever is less, (excluding church staff). Our 25% capacity is 37 people.

So far our two services, one at 8:45 AM and one at 10:30 AM, have been working well. Cleaning crews are having enough time to clean in between services and I'm getting a second chance to improve my sermon. Thanks church!

I also want to remind us of the following things:

- You will need to sign-up each week for a Sunday service on our website at the link below:

<https://www.arborheights.org/covid-19-update-page/>

This allows us to track numbers and stay under the 37 person requirement. It also allows us to follow-up with people if we have a confirmed case of COVID-19. Note you need to separately sign-up each member of your household; you cannot combine them into one registration.

- If you have not joined us on a Sunday yet, you will need to review the "Sunday Service Reopening Guidelines & Procedures" document on the webpage referenced above or on our church Facebook page. This document details the specific procedures we're following at our Sunday service and expectations we ask you to follow to safely return.
- Please review the "COVID-19 Return Plan" on the webpage referenced above. This document details our plans over the next several months on how we'll slowly phase back into all normal church ministries and operations.

Please continue checking our website and Facebook page for additional information and updates.

As a reminder, while we're now gathering as a church at our building on Sundays, we're still offering our service on the platforms below. Please note we will **only** be streaming the 10:30 AM service.

- Facebook livestream - <https://www.facebook.com/ArborHeightsCommunityChurch/>
- On Mondays, after the Sunday service, on our [AHCC YouTube Channel](#).
- On Sunday afternoon, the message is available on our website at www.arborheights.org under "Resources" then "Sermons".

Ministries

Global Missions

If you did not see the communication earlier this week, please see below.

As you know, we have been partnering now for over two years with IncaLink and their ministry Casa Elizabeth. We were informed Sunday of an urgent prayer request.

Recently, a new 13 year old girl, Estefania, came to Casa Elizabeth 38 weeks pregnant. She wound up having an epileptic seizure at breakfast one morning which resulted in a hospital visit and potentially exposing other girls and families in the home to COVID-19. Sadly, the baby did not make it. The doctors did confirm she does not have COVID-19, but she is still in the ICU recovering. She is currently on antibiotics and hoping to make a full recovery. Those at Casa Elizabeth are still worried they will get COVID-19, which as you can imagine, has created a degree of worry and panic.

This is an incredibly sad situation on multiple fronts, but we know our God does His best work in seemingly impossible circumstances. Would you please pray for Estefania who has to face the loss of her child, a diagnosis of epilepsy, ICU recovery and the uncertainty of her future? That is a lot for anyone to handle, let alone a 13-year old.

Pray for the protection and health of the other girls and helpers at Casa Elizabeth. Pray for their hearts that they would not succumb to worry, fear and panic, but trust in God alone. Pray for wisdom for the leaders of the home as they make medical, logistical and spiritual decisions regarding the weeks ahead. Please pray for a miracle. Pray that in all of this, in the suffering and the healing, Jesus would be glorified.

In addition, our Missions Team decided this week to give \$750 to Casa Elizabeth out of our Missions budget to assist them with needs. Please contact our Missions Director Randy Newburn at rnewburn@gmail.com with any questions.

Children's Ministry

As we've now come back together as a church on Sundays, and during this initial season, we've decided to return as families and not offer children's programming.

As part of the family service, we're doing the following things:

- Providing an activity pack for each child (one for the service and one to come home)
- Having a children's "ministry moment" during the service by our Director Leah Barham
- Having a shorter service time (1 hour)
- Incorporating parents and children in the service (prayer, announcements, etc.)

Leah is also launching this week a fun new thing; a summer small group! She's facilitating a small group of 5th graders who are transitioning to our youth ministry in the fall. They will be playing some fun games, studying the Bible and building deeper relationships.

If you have any additional questions about Children's & Family Ministry, please reach out to Leah at leah@arborheights.org.

Community Groups

As a reminder, our community groups are taking a break for the summer to allow time for family, vacations and rest. As we get closer to the fall, more plans will come out about groups and sign ups. If you have any questions about our community groups, Pastor John can be reached at john@arborheights.org or 206-375-2498.

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry will continue gathering on Friday nights at 7:00 pm via Zoom for a time of games, conversation and Bible study. If your son or daughter has not joined, please reach out to Linnea at linnea@arborheights.org to get the Zoom information.

Linnea is also looking to pick back up the Student Leadership Team over the summer. If you have any questions youth related, reach out to Linnea at the email above.

Arbor Heights Elementary Need

We are continuing to provide grocery gift cards to AHE during the summer. While school ended in late June, the 22 families at AHE still need assistance and we can give it. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity. Thank you!

If you would like to give towards families at AHE, 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.

Transparency

As of July 8th, 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.

Events

Church Camping Trip

Save the date! While we don't know what July and August will look like, we're still planning to have our annual church camping trip on August 7th-9th at Whispering Pines in Cle Elum. More information will come as we get closer, but if you plan to bring a motorhome, please contact Amy Policarpio at 425-737-4342 ASAP!

CityServe

We are also continuing to plan for our annual CityServe event at Arbor Heights Elementary on August 16th. While it may look a little different than last year, we likely will continue our beautifying of the school grounds and painting the playground area. Please contact Charnell Bolger at charnellbolger@yahoo.com or 206-261-4445 with any questions.

Outdoor Movie Night

We are planning to have our outdoor movie night on Saturday, August 29th at 8:00 pm in ARK Park. This has been a fun tradition the last couple of years so put it on the calendar and more details will follow in August.

Giving

If you have missed it in previous communications, below are the available giving options:

1. Give at our new Giving Station in the back of the sanctuary
2. Mail in your check. The church address is 4113 SW 102nd St., Seattle, WA 98146
3. 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.
4. Give online at our website under "Give"; www.arborheights.org
5. 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.

Long Suffering

It's hard to wait isn't it? Whether were in a grocery store line, on the freeway or at a restaurant, waiting is difficult. And we've been doing a lot of waiting these past 4 months. Waiting for the coronavirus to end and us resuming normal life.

All this waiting has made me think about the patience and long suffering of God. A God who patiently waits and waits for people to turn their hearts and wills to Him. Day after day they reject Him, ignore Him and disregard Him, yet there He is, waiting patiently. A God who patiently waits for me as I try to resolve a situation on my own only to turn to Him as a last resort. A God who waits to roll up the scroll of human history as long as possible to allow as many people as possible to repent and come to Him. Peter tells us that with God, "a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day."

When I think of God's long suffering, it makes my waiting in the pandemic look like a toddler tantrum. I wait 5 seconds, don't get what I want, or think I'm entitled to, and throw an adult temper tantrum. But maybe all our waiting isn't to get what we want but learning to want what He wants. I'm discovering that my waiting is actually God's grace of wresting away my God-replacements that I cling to each day.

So while waiting in the pandemic is hard, I pray we come out of this with a whole lot more Jesus and a lot less of ourselves.

A Recovering Tantrum Thrower,

Pastor John