**[Pastor’s Message: COVID-19](http://gregoryparkbaptist.com/index.php/2020/03/15/pastors-message-covid-19/)**

[March 15, 2020](http://gregoryparkbaptist.com/index.php/2020/03/15/pastors-message-covid-19/)

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In the last few days, cases of **COVID 19** have been confirmed in Jamaica.  This has set off quite a bit of panic across the nation, with many persons stock-piling antibacterial products and in the process robbing their fellow citizens of any chance for their own protection.  That’s what chronic and fear mongering does.

In addition to that, others are promoting their own understanding of scripture using the name of God as a further discouraging weapon seeking to drive fear in the minds of the unknowing, the anxious and the fearful.

Still there are others who are quick to circulate rumours regarding recent funerals in Jamaica and the outcome of that has been resentment towards particular families with the authorities having in recent days to foil an attempt to mob a particular family in rural Jamaica.

I urge us to maintain postures which are sensible and sensitive and reflective of the people of God who are never given over to sensationalism.  Our faith reminds us that we live in a fallen world where all kinds of stuff afflicts the human family and the whole created order.  There are famines, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, diseases, viruses and more and these are only but part of the reality of our lives and must never be simplistically equated as with divine punishment.

We live as part of the whole creation which groans, longing for our redemption (Romans 8) but it is not yet.  I urge us to be careful and to avoid circulating rumours and spurious “prophetic” words which    only serve to undermine the sense of calm which must prevail at this time.

**What are we doing as Church?**

Over the last few days, a small team from this congregation, met and considered some of the particular steps we need to take to further prevent the transmission of the virus and also determine what steps we should take if the virus were to turn up among us.  Please note the advice on the Bulletin and pay keen attention to the releases from the Ministry of Health & Wellness, especially noting what each one of us should do if we suspect we are ill.

With regards to our own operations here, we wish to indicate the following:

* We are reminding members of the congregation, who are ill, to stay away for a time and to seek medical advice (services will be live-streamed)
* We have suspended the activities of the Learning Centre for 2 weeks in the first instance
* We are offering sanitization facilities to all who enter our buildings and our Offices
* We are suspending the meetings of the Orchid Senior Citizens Club, as that group represents the age group highly at risk
* We are suspending the House Fellowship Meetings, until further notice
* We are suspending the serving of Holy Communion, until further notice
* We are upgrading the protocols and practices regarding the cleaning and sanitization of our facilities here
* We will be adjusting the length of our Worship Services so as to lessen the time we gather (for as long as we can gather)
* The Sunday School is being asked to be particularly mindful of its Program at this time\*

Please follow the Church’s website, **www.gregoryparkbaptist.com**, and watch for legitimate and healthy material which will be circulated in some of the Whatsapp groups which I know exist among some members.

We have not been given a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.  Let us cooperate in this and God bless us all.

**Karl E. Henlin (Rev.)**

**Pastor**

**March 15, 2020**

***“For further discussion”***