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*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*
John 16:33

And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”
Matthew 21:22



Be Calm, Be Prepared and Be Assured

As we continue to monitor and learn more about the spread of the coronavirus, we want to share helpful information to ensure that you and your family can protect yourselves against the disease.

The Coronavirus

In December 2019, Chinese health officials announced they were investigating a pneumonia outbreak of unknown etiology (cause) in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the unknown disease, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), is a new respiratory virus that is part of the larger family of the coronavirus.

In the U.S., the state of Washington is the epicenter of the Novel Coronavirus and just recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) said the new coronavirus is now close to becoming a pandemic. “*We’re reaching that point,*” Michael Ryan, executive director of the WHO’s health emergencies program, said in a Monday news conference. “*We’re very close.*”

The COVID-19 virus can spread from person to person and to date has infected more than 100,000 people globally in 90 countries, territories, or areas causing more than 3,600 deaths. Health officials indicate that the disease symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and pneumonia and while the exact incubation period for this coronavirus has yet to be determined, officials believe most infected people will develop symptoms between two days to two weeks after exposure.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that about 80 percent of people infected with the virus around the world have had mild respiratory symptoms. A small percentage overall, likely less than 1%, have died. Most of the fatalities have occurred with older people.

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19). However, efforts to create a vaccine are underway, but one is not expected to be available until at least next year. A therapy may be available sooner, federal authorities indicated.

Learn more about Coronavirus - To learn more about the 2019 Novel Coronavirus visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/) website.

Steps you can take

The best way to prevent illness from the coronavirus is to avoid being exposed to it. Prevention should be a priority at this time, especially during this cold and flu season. Health officials from the Center of Disease Control and the World Health Organization along with local and state public health officials offer steps to be taken to help prevent the spread of the virus.

- **Keep calm and measured**

It's important to remain calm during a crisis and to have a realistic perspective. While the virus is a real threat, panicking can only serve to fuel unhelpful thoughts and feelings. Mental health experts emphasized its normal, and potentially even helpful, to feel anxious at this time.

"Anxiety, when it's at the right level, encourages us to take positive action," said Dr. Kelli Harding, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. There are a number of different things you can do to stay calm during this fraught period.

- **Take a media break.** - When you feel overwhelmed and anxious, take a media break. Limit the amount of time you spend reading about the virus. Don't immerse yourself in news about the coronavirus 24/7. Try and limit time on media outlets. It is important to remain informed, but try and achieve a healthy balance by sticking to factual data from reliable sources, e.g. [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, \(CDC\)](#), as well as state health agencies, etc., rather than some of the emotionally driven websites and news channels.
- **Don't jump to conclusions or be fatalistic; work with facts!** - Look at the information available. Avoid scaremongering language like 'plague', 'pandemic', 'death toll' etc. that only serve to feed anxiety. It is a fact that some have sadly died as a result of the coronavirus, however the present reality is that it is exceptionally rare.
- **Reduce your feelings of helplessness.** - Focus on what you can do rather than what you cannot to keep safe. This is your responsibility - this is what you can control! Minimize the risk of infection within your own environment. Be mindful of good sanitation and avoid international travel if advised to do so. Taking charge of your physical and psychological environment will enable you to keep perspective while still acknowledging the serious concerns about the coronavirus in a healthier non catastrophic way.

Be prayerful and reflective during the coronavirus crisis and first seek the peace of Christ to reign in your hearts (Hebrews 3:15). Christ has already given us his peace, but his peace is not to remove us from disaster and death, but rather to have peace in the midst of disaster and death, because Christ has already overcome these things (John 14:27, 16:33).

During this difficult time, let each of us promise to help and support each other. To care for everyone in our community so that we each become blessed by caring for the sick, the lonely, the homeless and all who are in need.

- **Be Prepared**

Being adequately prepared will provide peace of mind. [Ready.gov](#), the government's website, has concrete tips, like storing a two-week supply of water and food.

- Gradually stock up extra supplies of important items, such as: soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, over-the-counter medications and prescription medications.
- Gradually stock up on non-perishable foods.
- Create a back-up plan for work, school and childcare in the event of closures.
- Talk to your workplace about getting ready. Plan to telework, if possible
- Create a space in your home to care for sick family members.

Below are prevention tips from the CDC and other health officials:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- If you think you're sick, notify your health care provider by phone. It's important to call ahead so that you can be safely evaluated to prevent exposing others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Have pain and cold medications on hand
- Be sure to have a supply of your prescribed medications on hand for several weeks should you have to self-isolate or shelter in place.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Place lidded trash cans conveniently in your home for used wipes, tissues, etc.
- Have a rubber mat for shoes to be removed upon when entering your home. Spray a disinfectant on shoes and mat upon entering.
- Curtail or avoid all together large crowds (movie theatres, concerts, shopping malls, etc.), especially if you are over 60 years old and if you have underlying health issues, which make you more susceptible to the disease.
- Avoid shaking hands, touching, hugging, and kissing people in public; practice the fist or elbow bump.
- Curtail your normal social engagement to minimize public contact.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and certainly if your commute, which includes public transit.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The purpose of a face mask is to prevent droplets from sneezing and coughing from becoming airborne. *The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).* CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water, and avoid or limit drinks that will dehydrate you such as coffee, soft drinks and alcohol. Eating foods with high amounts of water, like fruits and vegetables, also helps.
- Boost your immune system, naturally. There are plenty of foods that can help your immune system. Make sure to consult your doctor
- Get plenty of sleep. Whether you're a workaholic or a party animal (or both), be sure to get enough sleep or your immune system will be weakened.
- Pray for peace, wisdom, protection and guidance

Be Assured

When disaster or crisis strikes, as Christians we must stand firm on our faith knowing as Paul firmly believed, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger or sword? . . . In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Roman. 8:35-39).

We encourage all Christians to pray fervently that our Lord may comfort and heal those already affected by this virus, and grant strength and wisdom to those working to combat and control the virus. Please be reminded that plans and preparation to combat the spread of the virus should not inadvertently serve to isolate or stigmatize members of our communities. In fact, our common work should be an opportunity to come together, being united in purpose, and care for those who in need of our Great Physician of souls and bodies.

Take comfort in the following scriptures to help fortify your faith:

- “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1
- “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psalm 55:22
- “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6

Finally, a measured approach driven by preparedness and not panic will help us to be ready for whatever comes our way. Let’s be informed to mitigate risks, and primed to respond as we seek to demonstrate the love of Christ to those who may be impacted.

Stay informed as information becomes available. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Be calm, be prepared and be assured for we dare to believe our God is able to do exceedingly above all we can ask or imagine. **May our Lord, the Physician of our souls and bodies, grant us protection, health, and peace!**

Anointed to Serve,
Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., Senior Bishop
Bishop Staccato Powell, President
Bishop Kenneth Monroe
Bishop Darryl Starnes
Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
Bishop Mildred Bonnie Hines
Bishop W. Darin Moore
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Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr.
Bishop S. Chuka Ekeman, Sr.
Bishop Joseph Johnson
Bishop Marshall H. Strickland
Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett
Bishop Warren M. Brown
Bishop Louis Hunter

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19