



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

DATE: March 20, 2020
TO: All Ministers and Members of the Church of God in Ohio
FROM : Bishop Ron Martin, Administrative Bishop
RE: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

In light of the continuing condition in our country and in the Church of God in Ohio, I believe that the following recommendation is necessary to protect the health and welfare of the members of the Church of God in Ohio and the communities in which we serve.

- Governor Mike DeWine has made numerous executive orders, one of which limits mass gathering, and warned us, “Everyone is in this fight, but we don't need to go into the battlefield, **we simply need to stay home**. Social distancing is so critical, and many Ohioans are starting to understand its importance, but there are still some who don't yet get it. This is a crisis that we have never seen in our lifetime, and everyone must recognize that their actions could have deadly consequences.”
- The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, has recommended no mass gatherings in excess of 50 persons, and only then with the strictest cleaning processes and code of conduct adhered to.
- President Trump has recommended *no gatherings above 10 people* for the two-week period beginning March 16, 2020.
- Confirmed reports of the Coronavirus have been reported in some church congregations, and the appropriate members are being notified of their exposure.

In meetings with pastors this week, it has been my strong recommendation, as the administrative bishop and by the unanimous vote of the state council, that all churches in the Church of God in Ohio comply with both the president's and governors' guidelines and requests. They have access to the best medical experts, records, and medical advice available. We have a responsibility to our families, members, state, and communities, of which we belong, to do our part in stopping the spreading of this virus. This is an opportunity to be a light to everyone by being creative, as we find alternative ways to minister to our congregations. We have the means to live-stream, to pre-record services on CD or DVD, or to mail sermons, lessons, devotions, and tithe envelopes to families at home, as we purpose to stay connected to those we are called to serve and CARE for! **Should further restrictions be enacted, they will supersede this statement!**

It is so important that each local church continue to place an emphasis on personal and corporate prayer during this time, as you assemble and empower local church leadership with a plan of action, which will assist you in ministering to, and keeping each member of your church connected. You can go to the Church of God in Ohio website ohiocog.com for resources and information which will assist you in this season. We must all be resourceful and creative during this time. No one knows how long these restrictions will be in place, but I am confident in the grace, mercies, and presence of God in all of this, and I know that He will see us through!

You are in my heart and prayers! I stand ready to assist you in any way possible.