

Dear First Baptist Belton Church Family,

Monday morning, I had an informative and decisive meeting with Greg Tysl, Administrative Ministry Council Chair and Patrick O'Dell, Deacon Chair. As you know the health and safety of our congregation and community is of utmost importance to us. Also, we have an ethical responsibility to put forth every effort to slow the spread of CoVid-19 in our community.

Therefore, we have decided to cancel all gatherings on our church campus, as well as all off campus church sponsored activities beginning today, Monday, March 16 until Palm Sunday, April 5. The situation will be reassessed at that time and the closure will either end or be extended. We will move forward following these guidelines:

1. The closure includes, but is not limited to: Sunday School, Worship, all Wednesday Activities, Music Rehearsals, Youth, Children's and Preschool Events, Committee Meetings, Group Meetings and all other scheduled activities of the church.
2. The Family Life Center will be closed until April 6 and all groups using this facility will need to cancel their meetings.
3. WEE School will continue to follow the closure schedule of the Anderson County School District.
4. All pastoral care visits will be made by telephone, text, email or other electronic means. We will not be able to visit hospitals, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities except in the case of emergencies. Our pastors will continue to make every effort to ensure anyone in need of ministry will be contacted. Please be sure to inform the church to keep us up to date about any needs of which you become aware.
5. The church offices will be open and our pastoral staff will remain on our regular schedule.
6. We encourage our Deacons to remain in contact with their families and Sunday School classes to continue to encourage each other and connect with one another when possible. Every effort should be made to "be the church" to each other and to our community during this difficult season.

7. We are researching ways to provide our worship service online while this closure is in place. However, in the meantime, we encourage you to worship with our sister churches who provide excellent televised and webcast worship services. Even though we will not gather together for worship, we remain First Baptist Church Belton living a lifestyle of worship as we Seek God, Serve Others and Share Faith.
8. We encourage all members to continue their financial generosity via mail, bank draft or you may bring your offering by the church office.
9. We will continue to pray for God to wrap His loving arms of mercy and grace around our church, our community, our nation and our world.

In the end, after much prayer and many conversations, we are certain we are doing the right thing at the right time.

Your pastor and friend,
T. Dale Lynch

PRAYING FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Sean & Lydia Stevenson – Church Planter/Elmwood Park Community Church of Elmwood Park, IL.

The Stevenson's request prayer for the replant of Elmwood Park Community Church as it becomes a life-giving church in the center of Elmwood Park. Pray for continued favor with residents, government and gatekeepers in the community.

Ron & Marsha Harvell – Chaplain/United States Air Force stationed in Washington, DC.

Please pray for the Lord to create in the Air Force a culture of faith and hope in Him. Pray our ministry teams are filled with God's Spirit and power as they serve globally.

A HYMN OF ENCOURAGEMENT

When peace like a river attendeth my way;
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well; it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul;
It is well; it is well with my soul!
~Horatio Spafford



CHOOSE FAITH OVER FEAR

What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?
Matthew 8:27

Think about the disciples hanging out with Jesus on a boat when a life-threatening storm erupts on the water. They're unprepared to face it and, panicking, realize they might die. The entire time this is happening, *Jesus is sleeping peacefully*. Instead of looking at Jesus' reaction to their situation, the disciples allowed their situation to dictate their reactions.

After begging Jesus to do something, He calms the storm...But not before asking them, "Why are you afraid?" His gentle rebuke over their lack of faith wasn't because they didn't believe Jesus could save them from the storm, but because they struggled to believe He would see them through it.

When we find ourselves in storms we can't control, how do we respond with faith? Here are three encouraging truths to remember:

1. **God has power over every storm.** If the wind and waves don't concern Him, then they shouldn't frighten you. You might not be able to change your situation, but you can choose to faithfully trust God in the middle of it.
2. **Fixing your eyes on Jesus leads to peace.** Are you looking at the size of the storm, or turning towards the One who can calm it? It's only by focusing on God, who knows every outcome, that you can navigate any situation with His wisdom and peace.
3. **Jesus is always in your boat.** It's easy to focus on your fears when you can't control your future. But thankfully, Jesus knows your future, and He's always by your side. And, He calls you to live by faith, not by sight.

Whenever you find yourself overwhelmed by life, you always have two choices: you can focus on your circumstances, or fix your eyes on Jesus.

If you choose to look to Jesus above everything else, you will begin to see that the storms you face are not nearly as powerful as the Savior choosing to walk through the storm alongside you.

