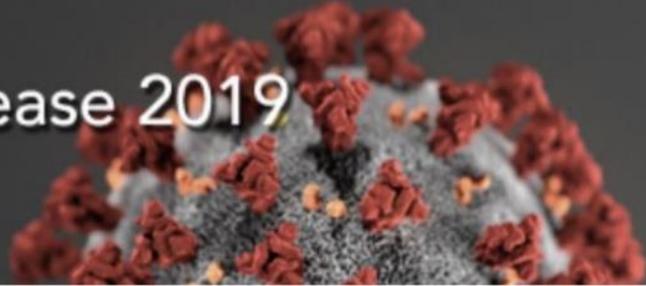




Consolidated Missionary Baptist
State Convention of Arkansas, Inc.
Dr. C. Dennis Edwards, President



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Greetings to the CMBSC Family

There was an artist who wrote the lines to a tune which said, “The Times They Are A-Changin,” and indeed they are. So swiftly the times morph provoking uncertainty and stoking fear. Plagued now with a pandemic, the world reels to and fro in a quandary as to what measures to take. That quandary has impacted the churches as well. How do we ensure the health and safety of our congregants? What are the best practices for these times? Do we give in to fears? Are we showing lack of faith if we adhere to the recommendations of officials?

The current recommendations are:

Americans are encouraged to stay at home and avoid work if they feel sick. Equally, parents and guardians are asked to keep children home and away from school if they start to show any symptoms. If one person in the house tests positive for COVID-19, the entire household is asked to stay home.

In each instance, people are advised to contact their medical provider. But as the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) cautions, patients who suspect they may have COVID-19 should call before seeking medical care to get the advice of a health professional. This will help prevent them from putting other people at unnecessary risk through exposure.

The document advises people who may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, either due to age or a severe underlying health problem—such as a condition affecting lung function or weakening the immune system—to take extra efforts to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding other people where possible.

Other advice issued in the guidelines include:

- Work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible.
- If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employers should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.

- Avoid eating and drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts—use drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options.
- Avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips and social visits.
- Do not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.
- Practice good hygiene:
- Wash your hands, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.

In addition to these new guidelines, the CDC is continually updating their website with [the latest information and advice](#) related to COVID-19 to help Americans stay on top of the pandemic—including instructions on [how to keep themselves safe](#) and [what to do if sick](#).

Certainly, there is a separation of church and state, but there is also the mandate of the Scriptures, “*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work*” (Titus 3:1). Indeed, we are people of faith and *walk by [it] and not by sight*. But we are also people who have the instructions of the Lord to be *wise as serpents*. We must use prudent judgment as to whether to continue to congregate and what activities to ask our congregations to be involved in. Having exercised the best possible judgment given the facts and the circumstances, we then trust God to take care of all of us.

QUICKLINKS:

CDC Information

- CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Arkansas updates: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>.

SPECIAL NOTE: While the attempt to curb this virus spread continues. Please consider live-streaming from websites, Facebook live, Youtube, zoom, freeconferencecall.com, radio devotionals, text messages from the pastor, email daily devotions, etc. Just in case you don’t understand how, most of these platforms can be done by a young person with a phone and internet access.