

Office of the Pastor of GMCBC of Scotlandville

To the Members of The Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We have been closely monitoring the rapidly evolving situation in our City/Parish related to the outbreak of the coronavirus-COVID-19 Variant (Omicron). May God be with us all in this difficult time of decisions and guide us to make the best choices for all our health and well-being.

Based upon consultations and the advised precautions and guidelines regarding social distancing, face masks/coverings, surge and uptick of the Omicron variant, etc., our church leadership team has opted to suspend our In-person Worship Service **IMMEDIATELY** until further notice. However, live streaming of our public Worship Service will continue.

THIS MEANS THERE WILL BE NO IN-PERSON PUBLIC SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE AT GREATER MT. CARMEL STARTING SUNDAY ON 9 JANUARY.

While the Louisiana Department of Health continues to assess the risk associated with this surging virus, as a faith community we must be particularly conscientious with our practices for the welfare of our church members, families, and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Since Sunday evening, I have meditated with a deep sense of urgency to suspend our In-person Worship Service due to a rising number of church members testing positive for the virus after being fully vaccinated. Several of the members who tested positive have been attending our In-person Worship Service. If you believe you have been exposed to the virus, please get tested at a number of testing sites in our area. Out of an abundance of caution, and in keeping with the Church's Protocols during this pandemic, it's my decision that the suspension occur at this interval.

Our congregational worship of our Lord and Savior is a foundational component of our faith, I feel that it is imperative we take this extraordinary measure, consistent with the measures of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), and other institutions within our City/Parish, to slow the capacity of this coronavirus to be transmitted through our church, families, and communities. My heart and soul calls us to love, and this action is taken in this spirit, recognizing that in doing so, we are protecting those who are most vulnerable.

We will be working in the coming days and weeks to further develop a 'social distancing worship' service on Sundays that will continue to involve our live streaming. As this will take

time, we will keep you apprised of its development. In the meantime, if you feel secure and safe being fully vaccinated and not exposed to individuals with risky behaviors, you are welcome to the church on Sunday's as we live stream. The church is **NOT** closed but instead still very vibrant and alive in all of us and we all need to try to keep it so; ***"Let those come, who will come."*** We only ask that you take the health precautions of wearing face masks/coverings, wash hands, use hand sanitizers available at the church. Your prayers and reflections as well as communication with God is more important than ever, so please keep the channel open and the church functioning within each and every one of us.

Additionally, during this period suspension of in-person worship, we humbly and respectfully encourage you to bring, mail, or drop off your Tithes and Offerings to the church. After normal church office hours, you can place your "Gifts to the Lord's" house in the church's lock mailbox; or, bring your offertory 'Gifts' to the church on Sunday's between the hours of 9 A.M. and no later than 12:30 P.M., to our finance committee members waiting at the westside entrance to the educational annex.

Since this will be a trying time for all of us, not just physically, but also mentally as we face anxiety and trepidation, remember you walk with God, so find your strength in that. Please show your Christian love for one another with an abundance of compassion, love and understanding. I would ask for your continued prayers for those who are ill with this coronavirus, for those who are caring for them, and for healthcare workers and others working to limit the virus spread.

Please make the extra effort to stay connected/in touch with fellow church members in the coming weeks. Call each other, email or text each other and most importantly, pray together. That is what this church is all about, our love for each other at all times even though we may not be physically present.

How long will we be suspending our in-person worship services? At this point, it appears we will be doing this until mid/end of February 2022. It's at that time that LDH predicts the Omicron variant will have peaked in our state and city/parish. We all hope that we can celebrate the Lord together in prayerful worship, but that will depend on how this contagion travels and all people of our communities are fully vaccinated, etc.

If you have any pastoral needs, please contact me or any of our Deacons directed.

Lastly, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:9, ***"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."***

To God be the Glory!

Reverend Cleo Earnest Lowe, Pastor