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March 17, 2020

Dear Allen Temple Members and Friends,

With each passing day, the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic is rapidly evolving and becoming increasingly urgent. On Sunday, March 15th, the Center for Disease Control issued guidance which advised that in-person gatherings of 50 or more persons should be cancelled. On Monday, March 16th, President Trump further discouraged the convening of groups consisting of 10 or more persons. Social distancing, frequent handwashing, and self-quarantine are the practices being advised by medical experts. We are truly in uncharted territory as a nation and as a human race. Nevertheless, God will bring us through this season together.

Please know that the health and safety of our members is, and will always be, my top priority. **For this reason, I have decided to cancel ALL in-person activities at Allen Temple until further notice.** Beginning Wednesday, March 18th, the church office will be closed, and we are asking that no person enter the building without the prior approval of the Pastor. In addition, hospital and shut-in visitations will be suspended, out of an abundance of caution. Our ministerial staff will rely upon phone calls and text messages to provide prayers and comfort to our members during this period of imposed social distancing.

Despite predictions from various news outlets and personalities, no one knows for certain how long this situation will last. Please know that I am closely monitoring this situation with an eye toward resuming our normal activities as soon as it is safely possible. While this decision is difficult and far-reaching, it is absolutely necessary for the safety and health of our members and our community. We must remain a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. This shutdown will cause severe disruptions to our normal church operations, specifically as it relates to our weekly worship services and our weekly giving opportunities. However, with your cooperation we can weather this storm together.

To that end, in lieu of weekly worship service, I will conduct a livestreamed Bible session via Facebook Live each Sunday at 11 am on our church Facebook page. A recorded link will also be available on our website following the session. In addition, we will conduct weekly Bible Study sessions via conference call for both the Noon and Evening sessions. Due to several logistical concerns this week, Bible Study will resume on next week, March 25th, at 12pm and 6pm. We will utilize technology to remain in constant contact with one another and to receive continued spiritual nourishment during this season of anxiety and unrest.

It is also important that we remain steadfast and committed with our tithes and offerings. Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, our church continues to incur essential operational expenses during this period. We cannot afford to use this shutdown as a means for discontinuing or decreasing our giving. You may give via our online/smartphone platform “Givelify” where you can setup recurring or one-time payments. A link to Givelify is also available on our [website homepage](#). In the alternative, you may utilize our postage paid offering envelopes to mail in your giving on a weekly/monthly basis. On Saturday, March 21st from 12pm to 2pm, you may drive-thru the church underpass to receive a set of envelopes for your use during this period. The church building, however, will not be accessible during this time. I cannot emphasize enough the need to ensure that we are faithful in this regard!

These are uncertain times, but we serve an able God. As recorded in 2 Timothy 1:7, “for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” I will continue to provide updates as the situation dictates. I would also encourage you to please join our email list by clicking the “Join Our Mailing List” button on our website home page. Please ensure that you check our website, Facebook page, and your email frequently to ensure that you receive timely updates regarding our church during this shutdown. Let us pray for God’s grace and protection to see us through these uncharted waters.

JOIN our calling post by texting **ALLEN** to **24251**.

Yours in Christ,

Jeffery B. Cooper, II

Rev. Jeffery B. Cooper, II
Senior Pastor