November 21, 2020

To Whom it may concern:

Follow the Science! This phrase has been touted loudly in our day. The leadership at MRCCC passionately attempts to follow Jesus first, but then to use scientific evidence, combined with prayer, to make wise decisions. We are thankful that the God we serve “does not change like shifting shadows” all the while the means and methods of combatting this disease have been shifting as we learn and grow in our understanding of it. As a result of this, we humbly attempt to follow the One who created the realities that science is seeking to discover through trial and error.

What led us to this point?

We had what appears to be an active COVID case at our church service on Nov 8th. In response, our leadership elected to hold services “online only” on Nov 15th to see if there was any spread among our fellowship. The person who tested positive contact traced, and then quarantined for 2 weeks as well… and we prayed.

Today we are thankful that no other infections have appeared. The leadership has therefore elected to hold services again on Nov 22 and going forward for those who desire and choose to do so. We have two services. An early service (8:30 am) where masks and social distance are required, as well as a later service (10:45 am) where these are recommended and encouraged, but left to the discretion of the individual to follow.

What are the reasons for opening again?

The purpose of this communique is to lay before you our rationale for remaining open. Please note, this is NOT a condemnation of any sort, of churches who have chosen not to gather.

First, as a church, we believe the state and federal government mandates, as our Governor has been careful to describe in previous pronouncements, are constitutionally not required of us. The Constitution is very clear on this point. While we recognize the importance of submission to authorities, we know our highest authority is to the God of the Bible. Here is what we learn from being Jesus followers. “*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another*…” We encourage our people to take appropriate actions like wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, and staying at home when sick. But we also believe matters of personal health to be ultimately the responsibility of the individual.

What evidence helped us make this decision?

Here is, to the best of our knowledge, the current facts on the ground regarding COVID 19.

1. What is The COVID 19 fatality rate?

As testing for this infection has become better and broader, the current fatality rate according to numerous studies stands at .2 to .3 %. That is 2 in 1000 cases. While a single physical death is too many, this statistic brings into question many of our current public policy decisions.

1. Who is at risk from COVID 19?

This infection is not equally dangerous for everybody. For young, and healthy younger adults, statistics indicate that this infection is less dangerous than the seasonal flu. But for the elderly and those in weakened states of health, it is much more dangerous. The COVID fatality rate for those 70 and older is about 4%.

1. What about the lockdown strategy?

Lockdowns have never been tried before as an across-the-board method of disease/virus control. The U.N. has estimated that 130 million people will starve this year as a result of the economic damage resulting from lockdowns. Resulting mental health consequences also abound. Spiritual health is weakened as well. Human beings were never designed to live locked down and alone. We believe that the church is an essential part of a person’s well-being and should not be neglected.

Where do we go from here?

At MRCCC we have prayerfully decided to follow a practice called FOCUSED PROTECTION. This means we attempt to protect the vulnerable while we allow the otherwise healthy to live and worship as normal. This is why we have resumed our two services for now.

What resourses did you find your information from?

Our COVID strategy – FOCUSED PROTECTION at MRCCC was partly based on information provided from the monthly publication IMPRIMUS put out by Hillsdale College. The title of the October 2020 issue is “A Sensible and Compassionate Anti-COVID Strategy” by Jay Bhattacharya (https://imprimus.hillsdale.edu/sensible-compassionate-anti-covid-strategy/). Information is also provided from the “Great Barrington Declaration” referenced in this publication ([www.gbdeclaration.org](http://www.gbdeclaration.org)).

ToliveisChrist,

Pastor Jerry Kissling