

August 8, 2020



Dear Spring Hills Family,

I am writing to you today from the last few days of my much-needed vacation. Please pray for Pastor Tevis as he fills in for me, preaching this weekend. This morning, I am writing to let you know that for the first time since this pandemic began in March, I became aware yesterday of a family within our congregation who has tested positive for Covid-19. They were in worship services this past weekend at Spring Hills. Additionally, one of their children attended the youth retreat event last week. Those with whom any of the family members have had close contact have been notified and the family is in contact with the Licking County Health Department, who has begun their work with family interviews and contact tracing. The parents really have no idea where they may have initially come in contact with the virus, but the first family member began to have symptoms last Sunday afternoon.

We want to be in prayer for this family and we are hopeful that they are blessed with a full and speedy recovery. We will remain in close contact with them to monitor how they are doing.

As I prayed and contemplated this yesterday, I felt this would be a good time to remind you of some important things. The first is that we serve a great and powerful God who calls us to faith above fear and to live with wisdom and discernment. Secondly, I want to lovingly remind you that the virus is active and circulating in our county and our community. This means that any time we leave our homes to go anywhere, including Church, we are assuming a certain level of risk. To mitigate this risk, we know there are three things we should do: 1) Wash our hands regularly; 2) Maintain a safe distance from others; and 3) Wear a face covering.

If you choose to come to church, please, to the best of your ability, observe these three basic guidelines.

We have re-sanitized the entire building, as we do between all services, and there is hand sanitizer readily available. Please use it. We ask that you do maintain distance from each other. Before the virus I personally enjoyed shaking hands and receiving hugs and high fives from church members. But for now, we need to remain vigilant about maintaining our distance from each other. Let me again remind you that face coverings are mandatory in Church for the entire service. The exceptions for this are people leading the service, children under ten years old and those who have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing face coverings. I know it is uncomfortable and for some controversial, but please, if you choose to come, wear a face covering.

In full transparency, I will let you know that there are some on our staff who feel we should go back to offering services only online. They feel that the risk of infection is higher than ever and that is the most prudent step we can take. I respectfully disagree and remain committed to offering live in-person services for those who choose to follow the guidelines. We are still offering our services online. For many of you, that is the safest and wisest way to worship with us.

These are challenging and difficult times but remember Jesus told us in John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

With deep love and affection,

Pastor Tom

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", written in a cursive style.

Here is a link from the CDC that addresses community spread for your information. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

Please pray for SHBC families that are, or may have been exposed to the virus. Pray for God's supernatural healing and relief of symptoms.

Pray for Licking County health care providers, for wisdom and safety as they treat patients and willingly expose themselves to possible infection.

Pray for wisdom and discernment for our nation's leaders as they struggle with how to address the effects of this pandemic.

Pray that we, as a local fellowship, can be Salt and Light to those who are fearful and anxious about their health, employment and families. Pray that God is glorified and His Kingdom grows!