

March 17, 2020

To all Idaho Conference Members and Entities,

COVID-19 has arrived in the state of Idaho as of March 13, 2020 and has been in the state of Oregon for a longer time period. Idaho has five confirmed cases, Oregon as of March 15 had 39 cases, with one death. As we look around at other parts of the country and world, we will likely have an increase in confirmed cases in both Idaho and Oregon.

The leaders of our government organizations and medical professionals are asking us to cancel gatherings, meetings, to find other methods of greeting that don't include handshakes or hugs. Most recently, health officials called on us to not gather in groups larger than ten people. We have been reminded to wash our hands and to quarantine if we become ill.

We have an opportunity to rise above the fear and renew our dependence on God. He is ultimately in control. Use this time to reconnect with God, with family. Follow the directives of our governmental leaders and medical professionals. At the same time, find other ways to connect as a church, as a school, as a community. The technology and social platforms we have today provide ways to connect and to further mission. Use your social media platforms to share hope and encouragement, to share God's love and care for each of us.

Remember to pray. That may seem cliché. In our busy world, time spent in prayer might only be at meals and at the end of the day. God is always there, always ready to listen, always ready to give comfort, hope and strength. Make time to spend with Him in His Word, the Bible.

Church Services

We must protect our churches, our members, our employees and our communities. While it may seem that we and other entities around us are taking drastic measures, we feel that it is our responsibility to do all that we can to protect everyone, especially those who are most vulnerable. **The Idaho Conference strongly recommends** that all churches go to an online only format through the end of March 2020. We will reevaluate before April 1 and provide additional guidance as needed. Please stay informed with your local community and consider what is appropriate for the age and health condition of your congregation.

Find a Livestream

If your church doesn't livestream its services, here are churches across our conference which do livestream:

Baker City, OR: <http://bit.ly/2vraPVz>

Caldwell, ID: <https://caldwellsda.org/live>

Cloverdale (Boise) ID: <http://bit.ly/2lQiuQz>

Eagle, ID (podcast, previous week): <http://bit.ly/3b0CAmX>
Kuna, ID: <http://bit.ly/2w3HEsd> (you will be asked to register)
Meridian, ID: <http://www.meridianadventistchurch.org/live>
Middleton, ID: <http://middletonadventist.org/live>
Nampa, ID: <http://bit.ly/38SEmoY>
Twin Falls, ID: <https://twinfallsid.adventistchurch.org/live-stream>

“Meet” Online

Technology gives us ways to “meet” together via video or phone conferencing:

- Zoom allows a person to send out an invitation to a group of people. Free for 45 minutes. Each person would then click on the emailed link.
- Facebook Messenger allows group video chats.
- Newer iPhones and iPads can support multiple people on FaceTime.
- Google Hangouts can support multiple people.
- There are several free phone conferencing services (not toll-free numbers):
 - <http://freeconferencecall.com>
 - <http://freeconferencecalling.com>
 - <http://freeconference.com>

Idaho Conference Schools and Preschools

Our Education department has recommended that all Idaho Conference schools and preschools in Idaho and Oregon follow the guidelines of either the state government, the local school district or health department. In order to not lose school instruction time, our schools are implementing E-days (online learning) if they are not meeting at the school.

The Idaho Conference has posted helpful links and information on our website: <https://IdahoAdventist.org/healthministries>. We are also posting updated information on Facebook (@IdahoAdventist), Instagram (@IdahoAdventist) and Twitter (@IdahoAdventist).

Camp Meeting 2020

At this point, **we are moving forward in planning camp meeting**, which is June 9 – 13, 2020 on the campus of Gem State Adventist Academy. Recognizing that many events across the country have been canceled because of COVID-19, we are monitoring requirements issued by government agencies and recommendations from the North American Division. **We will make a final decision on whether to hold camp meeting no later than May 4, 2020.** It is our hope and prayer that we will be able to meet together in fellowship and spiritual inspiration during camp meeting.

Next Steps

The Idaho Conference Administration continues to monitor this fluid situation. Watch our website and social media for further updates. We ask that each person remember that we are part of a body, each part is valuable to us and in God’s sight. Let’s not allow fear to drive us; instead, let’s move through this time as adults who know and share the love of God. As churches and individuals, we may find unique ministry opportunities to reach our members and communities, within the parameters of safe practices.

As an office, we have closed to the public, to maintain the safety and wellbeing of our employees, church members and the general public. We continue to work on the mission in the office and are available by phone, email and video conference. Contact us at 208.375.7524 or email idconf@idconf.org and designate who the email is for in the subject line. We are limiting our travel and utilizing phone and video conferencing when possible. We will inform those involved if we cancel a meeting or move it to phone or video conference.

You are very important to us! We want to protect your safety and your family. If you are well, do what you can within established guidelines and directives to care for others, for God's people. We ask you to partner with us, seeking God's guidance for how we are to respond and for His intervention. As David stated in Psalm 91:1 – 6 ESV:

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.”

Idaho Conference Administration

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