

Idaho Conference News Release
March 25, 2020

Idaho Conference Adopts a Virtual Model of Ministry in Response to COVID-19

Effective Thursday, March 26, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon is adopting a virtual model of ministry and continues to join in the social and civic responsibility to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

In this current model of ministry:

- We are following government recommendations and mandates in conjunction with denominational guidelines from the North Pacific Union Conference, North American Division and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. On Wednesday, March 25, 2020, Idaho Governor Brad Little issued a Stay at Home order for at least the next 21 days.
- The **Idaho Conference office staff will be working remotely** through at least April 15, 2020. Contact information for each person follows later (except for web version – that information is on individual department pages on our website, <https://IdahoAdventist.org>). Phone messages, email and postal mail will be checked regularly.
- All **our schools** (elementary, preschool and Gem State Adventist Academy) continue to be physically closed, in favor of online/distance learning. Oregon schools are closed until at least April 28, 2020, according to Executive Order 20-12 of Oregon Governor Kate Brown. All Idaho schools are closed at least until April 20, 2020, according to the order of the Idaho State Board of Education.
- All our **Oregon churches** should continue to meet virtually and develop creative ways to fellowship, through at least the month of April.
- All our **Idaho churches, companies and groups** should continue to meet virtually and develop creative ways to fellowship, through at least April 18, 2020.
- Our **pastors** are meeting weekly via Zoom video conference to share what is working, what's not and share their challenges and successes in this new paradigm of worship and ministry.
- **Adventist Community Centers** should temporarily suspend non-essential services and provide essential services in ways that will safeguard both volunteers and those seeking services.
- **Board of Directors and Board of Education** meetings scheduled for April 19 and April 23, respectively, will become Zoom video conferences.
- The **Pathfinder Fair/Adventurer Fun Day** scheduled for May 3, 2020 at Gem State Adventist Academy is canceled.
- At this point, **camp meeting planning for June 9 – 13 is continuing**. We are evaluating and will make a decision by May 4, 2020.

We will continue to do our best to keep up with **day-to-day operations of mission and ministry** in the Idaho Conference. We are committed to doing our part to slow the spread of Covid-19 in our communities. We encourage each person to follow the public health guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (<https://cdc.gov>) and healthcare professionals.

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we are here to find ways to meet spiritual, physical and emotional needs to care for people around us.

We encourage all of us, leaders and members, to continue building community, using the technologies at our disposal. Be safe, appropriate and legal in your efforts during this time.

Our **pastors and teachers continue to work** (they, like we at the office) and are not on vacation (unless they had previously scheduled one). Pastors are finding ways to communicate with their church members, to keep a sense of community and meet needs as possible. Our teachers are utilizing online/distance learning to keep students on their academic paths.

Conference office staff will be working remotely in most cases. To contact us, please see the following:

You may contact us via email or on our office extensions as listed below (if you know our cell phone number, you may call that as well). (This information will not appear on the web version, contact info is available in each individual department on our website.)

David Prest Jr:	208.375.7524 ext 111
John Rogers:	208.375.7524 ext 112
Patrick Frey:	208.375.7524 ext 123
Jeannie Leno:	208.375.7524 ext 115
Eve Rusk:	208.375.7524 ext 119
Jo Ann Miller:	208.375.7524 ext 110
Leanne Strickland:	208.375.7524 ext 114
Connie Williams:	208.375.7524 ext 122

In this new reality that we all face, we need each other and God's grace and blessing. **We ask our members across the conference to:**

- Make/continue a commitment to your own Bible study and pray for our community
- Call, text or email people each day, to let them know you care and build a greater sense of community
- Safely check on your neighbors, the elderly and the vulnerable in your church and community
- Be safe – safeguard your own health and seek healthcare assistance when needed, following local and federal guidance on ways to safely do so.

Keep connected with your church, your family, your community and with your conference. Updated information is posted at <https://IdahoAdventist.org> on the Health Ministries page. You will also find resources for parents and a host of other information there.

Follow us on Facebook (@IdahoAdventist, @IdahoCampMeeting), Instagram and Twitter @IdahoAdventist. **Follow your local church and school** on their social media. If your church doesn't have an online presence, a list of conference churches which livestream or post videos is located on our Health Ministries page at <https://IdahoAdventist.org>.

Share virtual ministry needs and ideas with your pastor, principal or local leadership. While they may not be able to implement every suggestion, they are human, too. We're all feeling some stress because of the current circumstances.

Part of our worship is giving. God has given us so much and continues to do so. Even though we are not meeting together physically, there are ways to continue your worship/stewardship. Your local church will still have expenses. God has asked us to return our tithe, to trust in Him. This is not about money. People matter more. However, we all know that ministry does take money.

- Many churches utilize Adventist Giving Online (see your church website).
- For those that do not, the conference has an Online Giving link (Adventist Giving) and has included a Combined Budget line item. We will send any Combined Budget (aka Church Budget) we receive to the church where you hold membership.
- You can mail your check (please do not send cash) to your church. The Post Office is still working.

We've never seen anything like this before, not in our lifetimes. While there are concerns, we also have great opportunity for ministry, for sharing what God has done for us. Use the tools you have (mail, phone calls, text, email, social media, etc.) to share positive, uplifting, even humorous messages. We all need each other. **Be bold in sharing your love for God in low-touch ways.**