



Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your encouragement and continued prayers, especially during these unprecedented times. This has been one of the most difficult periods we have ever faced as a church and it is wearing on many of us, including the church leadership. Not only does the State change its guidelines weekly but Satan is on the attack and doing his best to divide our church and make the worship of our great God as difficult as possible. We ask for your prayers, patience, and grace as we have been making extremely hard decisions weekly during this unparalleled season. We truly are in uncharted territory, not knowing what tomorrow holds. But God does, and we trust in His sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom knowing He holds the future in His hands.

Let us be clear, we believe as an elder board that our state government is acting unconstitutionally and unjustly taking away freedoms from its citizens that violate our religious liberties. Yet even though we believe the state is acting unconstitutionally, as Christians we have a higher calling according to Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 to submit to our government as best we can. Therefore, our hope and prayers have always been to lead our church family into biblical obedience of the state, not disobedience. As long as the state is not asking us to do something God has forbidden or forbidding something God has commanded, we should do our best to submit.

That last qualification is extremely important as we move forward because God is our highest authority, not California. We are commanded to submit to governmental authorities unless those commands violate Scripture. Acts 5 clearly presents a scenario where Peter declares that we are to obey God rather than man.

(Acts 5:29) But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31 He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

We know many of you have been wondering if we have been acting in civil disobedience by singing the last 2 weeks. The answer is no. We have not engaged in civil disobedience as a church by singing. According to the Pacific Justice Institute, if a staff member is not leading or singing during our worship service, we are not going against Cal OSHA's guidelines. Cal OSHA's guidance and authority only extend to employees singing in the workplace. The guidance has no authority over volunteers and congregants. Please read over the attached document to see the legal advice we have been given. [\(put link here?\)](#)



Thomas Neely is our worship director and a COBC staff member. It is our desire that he lead our church family into worship through song, therefore, this Sunday Thomas will lead worship in the patio area in front of the church. Following this time of singing, we will move inside for the sermon. Further directions will be given Sunday morning.

Also, the handwriting is on the wall that we will most likely be given orders soon to move our worship service outside. Therefore, we are in the planning process of how that could work for our church. Please pray for us as decisions are having to be made quickly.

These next few weeks may be awkward and frustrating for many of you as we do our best to jump through hoops to stay in compliance with the State. Please know that we are not acting out of fear but a desire to obey God by submitting to our governing authorities (Romans 13). At some point, we may have to purposely lead our congregation into civil disobedience as the State seems to be infringing on how we worship our God. If that day comes, it will not be an easy decision for us to make. Please pray that God directs our hearts and minds to lead our church boldly and humbly.

We as a pastoral team love the church body at COBC, and we are thankful to God for each one of you. The encouraging letters, text messages, emails, and even plates of cookies have been a huge blessing. Please continue to pray for the future of God's church and have confidence that He will use everything for His Glory and for our good (Romans 8:28).

In Christ -

Your Pastoral Team