

NORTH CENTRAL OHIO CLERGY JOINT STATEMENT April 23, 2020

Dear Governor DeWine,

As stakeholders and faith leaders in Richland County, we would like to thank you and your administration for your proactive efforts to protect the health and safety of Ohioans during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the dramatic reduction of projected cases and loss of life, we believe your leadership and instincts have been directed by Almighty GOD.

Unlike other governors, you have respected the First Amendments rights of citizens, notably for those persons of faith. This deed will not be forgotten.

Interestingly, the duration from when the initial “Director’s Stay at Home Order” was first issued to when the extended orders are set to expire on May 1st will be a total of forty days. The number forty in the Bible generally represents the season of trials and testing.

While we know our State is not out of the woods yet during this outbreak, we understand there is a balancing act between protecting both our public health and our economic interests. We agree social norms must be adjusted even after the orders expire to minimize COVID-19.

With that being said, as one hundred (100) leading shepherds of the faith community, barring an unforeseen escalation in cases, we request you consider transitioning Ohio to a new season, by allowing the Director’s Stay at Home Order to expire on May 1st, 2020. We have included a suggested roll out for congregations to follow. You remain in our prayers Governor. As the Bible says, “A man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

Respectfully,

RICHLAND COUNTY CLERGY (77)

Pastor Randy Raynes, Mansfield Fellowship Baptist	Pastor Mike Stine, Clear Fork Alliance
Pastor James Garrett, Ontario Christian Fellowship	Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont Community Church
Pastor Russell Stanford, All Believers in Christ	Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Community
Pastor Dink Porter, First Church of Open Bible	Pastor Bill Lewis, Buter Connections Church
Pastor Jody Odom, Ambassadors for Christ	Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill Baptist
Pastor James Hill, Paradise Freewill Baptist	Pastor Dallas Waggle, Lucas Foursquare Church
Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community Church	Pastor Clint Zeigler, Sovereign Christ Church
Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Church of GOD	Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Mansfield Potter House
Pastor Art Kennard, Shelby Maranatha Christian	Pastor Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community Church
Pastor Larry Hulver, New Liberty Baptist	Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist
Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center	Pastor Terry Garrett, Lexington Fusion Church
Pastor Robert O’Brien Apostolic Faith Assembly	Pastor Clarence Sanderfer, New Life Baptist
Pastor Steve Schag, Shelby Calvary Baptist	Pastor Les & Grace Farley, Mansfield Irresistible Church
Pastor Ron Smals, Woodville Grace Brethren	Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD

NORTH CENTRAL OHIO CLERGY JOINT STATEMENT cont'd

Pastor Dan Baer, Mansfield Gospel Assembly
Pastor Dan Zediker, Mansfield Mission Point
Pastor Jeff Coggins, Adario United Methodist
Pastor El Akuchie, Godsfield House of Prayer
Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
Pastor Ben Gregg, Plymouth Church of GOD
Pastor Anthony Cooper, Shelby Life Church
Pastor Matt Pond, Shelby First Freewill Baptist
Pastor Bruce Copley, Mansfield Faith Chapel
Pastor Darrin Thurber, Seventh Day Adventist
Pastor Ferlie Yate, Hanna Road Church of GOD
Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship
Pastor Don Wilson, Mansfield Faith Assembly
Pastor Paul Lintern, Southside Christian Church
Pastor Russ Smith, Wesley Evangelical Church
Pastor David Guild, Mansfield Foursquare Gospel
Pastor Mark Meyers, Grace Point Sanctuary
Pastor Kevin Evans, Ganges Liberty Baptist
Pastor Louis Blevins, Latter Rain COGIC
Pastor Kelly Meckes, Mansfield Friends Church
Pastor Floyd Allen, Philippian Community Church
Pastor Glenn Phillips, Hillside First Church of GOD
Pastor David Parsons, Zion's Refuge Baptist
Pastor Tim George, Abundant Grace Fellowship
Pastor Henry Bradley, New Community Temple COGIC

Pastor Ted Howard, Apostolic Holiness
Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Baptist Temple
Pastor Chad Hayes, Caeserea Baptist
Pastor Denny Finnegan, First Evangelical Presbyterian
Pastor Joe Smith, Westside Baptist Church
Pastor James Spencer, Peoples' Baptist
Rabbi William Hallbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom Center
Pastor Rich Rader, Mayflower Congregational
Pastor Mike Wilson, Lincoln Heights Baptist
Pastor Clyde Kerby, Ministries of Hope & Healing
Pastor Earl Eiklor, Cornerstone Freewill Baptist
Pastor Mark Bailey, Mansfield Freewill Baptist
Pastor Sylvester Ginn, Hesed Agape Ministry
Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran
Pastor Larry Hill, Bethel Freewill Baptist
Pastor Christopher Thomas, Diamond Hills Baptist
Pastor Mark Cobb, Mansfield Providence Baptist
Pastor Brian Hall, Ontario Abundant Life Tabernacle
Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth LifePoint Church
Pastor Les Champer, Shelby First Church of the Nazarene
Pastor Rick Wiseman, Mansfield Promise Land Fellowship
Pastor Bill Howell, Shiloh Messiah House of Prayer
Pastor David Ferrell, Mansfield Holiness Chapel
Pastor Tim Davis, Newville Baptist

ASHLAND COUNTY CLERGY (9)

Pastor George Swain, Homerville Grace Brethren
Pastor Layton Broome, Paradise Hill UMC
Pastor Jeff Coggins, Emmanuel UMC
Pastor Todd Grover, Maranatha Baptist Church
Pastor James Mitchell, Polk Temple Baptist

Pastor John Bouquet, Savannah Bethel Baptist
Pastor Joe Maggelet, Ashland Fellowship Christian Athletes
Pastor John Temple, Loudonville Trinity Community
Pastor Bill Ludwig, Five Stones Community Church

CRAWFORD COUNTY CLERGY (8)

Pastor Mike Rose, Hope on the Hill Chapel
Pastor Danny Akers, Victory Rock P & W Center
Pastor J.C. Church, Victory in Truth Ministries
Pastor William Strader Jr., Bucyrus First Alliance

Rabbi Bob Bauer, Beit El Elyon Congregation
Pastor Chris Spencer, Crestline Grace Baptist
Pastor Matt Smith, Love Action Church
Pastor Bill Fox, Crestline Faith Community

MORROW COUNTY CLERGY (3)

Pastor David Bates, Unity Freewill Baptist
Pastor Steve Dennis, St. Paul's Lutheran

Pastor Steve Brenneman, Awakening Christian Center

KNOX COUNTY CLERGY (3)

Pastor Joe Beran, Batemantown UMC
Pastor Aaron Boggs, Fredericktown Freewill Baptist

Pastor Joe Beran, Berlin UMC

Front Lines Ohio

120 Clergymen call Ohio to prayer during COVID-19 pandemic (PHOTO GALLERY)(VIDEO)

On March 25, 2020 By Admin



NORTH CENTRAL OHIO — On Wednesday, faith leaders across the Buckeye Bible Belt held a press conference regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Their statewide call to prayer comes less than one year after local officials observed the anniversary of a victory against another pandemic that occurred almost two centuries prior.

Last year, both the Mansfield Mayor and Richland County Board of Commissioners [publicly acknowledged](#) Divine intervention that curtailed the cholera pandemic in August of 1849 after corporate prayer and fasting. In light of the COVID-19 world crisis, one hundred-twenty area clergy also feel the Almighty can heal their land if His people humble themselves.

Pastor Paul Lintern of [Oakland Lutheran](#) and [Southside Christian Church](#) recounted the compelling [account](#) outside the Troy Township Fire Station before joining three other clergy in reading the [joint proclamation](#).

Pastor Louis Blevins of [Latter Rain COGIC](#), described the chain events leading up to the proclamation of national and state emergencies involving COVID-19. “With tens of thousands of cases occurring throughout China and the rest of the world, and a collapse in the stock market this month resulting in the largest drop since the ‘1987 Crash,’ the cancellation of schools, elections, and other cultural events has reached epic proportions across the nation.”



PHOTO: Mansfield Pastor Louis Blevins reads the clergy proclamation with Pastor Jody Odom in the background. (Photo courtesy of Nigel Hardin) For more photos of the press conference, click on the image above to access Frontlines Ohio Facebook

Pastor Jody Odom of [Ambassadors for Christ](#), asserted that “the Bible is a leading source of modern health knowledge,” and cited Scriptural examples and a list of Bible-believing pioneers in medicine. He also reported local developments from last year.

“We are calling Ohioans to a season of corporate prayer and fasting, especially during the zenith of the Holy Week and Passover observances from Sunday, April 5th thru Thursday, April 16th. We stand in solidarity as a faith community during these extraordinary times being fully convinced in the words of Psalm 91 that only the Most High God will be our refuge and fortress and will deliver us from the perilous pestilence.” -Ohio Clergy Joint proclamation

“Following Governor DeWine’s oath of office taken on nine Bibles on January 15th, 2019 and a declaration of 2019 as the [“Year of the Bible”](#) by North Central Ohio clergymen from one hundred and fifty congregations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported [minimal influenza cases](#) in Ohio despite rampant cases nationwide.”

Pastor Lintern recalled how “Twenty-seven North Central Ohio clergymen illustrated spiritual health can affect biological outcome by forwarding a 2016 Harvard study to area medical providers in the Fall of 2016 discussing the correlation between church attendance and the [decreased risk](#) of both cardiovascular mortality and cancer mortality.”



PHOTO: Orville Pastor Jerry O'Brien prays to conclude the clergy press conference. (Photo courtesy of Nigel Hardin)

The clergy statement concluded, “As leading clergymen from one hundred and twenty congregations across North Central Ohio, we are calling Ohioans to a season of corporate prayer and fasting, especially during the zenith of the Holy Week and Passover observances from Sunday, April 5th thru Thursday, April 16th. We stand in solidarity as a faith community during these extraordinary times being fully convinced in the words of Psalm 91 that only the Most High God will be our refuge and fortress and will deliver us from the perilous pestilence.”

Pastor Jerry O'Brien of [Faith Harvest Fellowship](#) closed the press conference in a heartfelt prayer reciting Psalm 91.

“Through all that we have gone through and seen as ministers, it has taught us to trust You for the things we cannot now see. We trust You GOD that You will restore the years that the locusts have stolen. We pray for an end to this virus.”

During the 2008-2009 “Great Recession,” eighty-three north central Ohio clergymen called for a day of prayer and fasting after General Motors tragically announced the closure of one of the area’s large-scale stamping plants.

<http://frontlinesohio.com/index.php/2020/03/25/120-clergymen-call-ohio-to-prayer-during-covid-19-pandemic-photo-galleryvideo/>

Front Lines Ohio

Ashland faith leaders converge for prayer at city hall during pandemic (VIDEO)

On April 13, 2020 By Admin



ASHLAND — Last month, President Donald Trump called the nation to prayer to combat the Coronavirus Pandemic. Many took part in that day of prayer, but in Ashland County, the corporate prayers have not stopped. Public prayer by faith leaders at government locations is not an aberration in Ashland, it has become the norm.

“With more than one hundred and five churches in Ashland County, many of our people who live in our community believe in the power of prayer,” says Ashland Mayor Matt Miller. “So whether it be in times of personal crisis or national and even worldwide crisis, it only follows that we would together lift up our requests and concerns to our faithful Creator who has provided for us and protected us ever since the very beginning of time.

The Ashland Ministerial Association (AMA) annually holds one of the largest National Day of Prayer assemblies in the State of Ohio. It also has coordinated prayer invocations at many of the monthly county’s municipal council meetings and township trustee board meetings. Now the AMA is coordinating weekly public prayer meetings at government offices in response to the recent pandemic.

Mayor Miller comments, “We have a strong and united faith community in Ashland County. Our church leaders and other ministerial leaders recognize that some of the most important work that they will do, occurs outside of their church buildings and regular services. Some of the most critical social issues facing our country are being addressed most effectively by members of our faith community.”

“Some of the most critical social issues facing our country are being addressed most effectively by members of our faith community.”

Ashland Mayor Matt Miller

In addition to the two meetings at Ashland City Hall on (March 22nd.) public prayer has occurred at the County Building on March 29th, and the City School Administrative Building on April 5th. The meetings consist of guided times of prayer by a group of clergy, faith-based executive directors, and even the Ashland Mayor.

Pastor Scot Myers of Ashland Christian Church serves as the AMA President and Pastor John Bouquet of Savannah Bethel Baptist serves as the National Day of Prayer Chairman.

For the national response effort, President Trump called for a National Day of Prayer on March 15th. His proclamation stated, “We should all take to heart the holy words found in 1 Peter 5:7: ‘Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.’ Let us pray that all those affected by the virus will feel the presence of our Lord’s protection and love during this time. With God’s help, we will overcome this threat.”



Church leaders lead public prayer at Ashland City Hall on March 15th. Click on the image above to watch video of the public prayer.

(Photo courtesy of Ashland County Pictures Facebook)

With Ashland as the local prototype, many would agree that the nation as a whole is experiencing a heightened hunger and awareness of GOD in this season of crisis.

According to the Christian Post, Tyndale House Publishers, reports their Life Application Study Bible sales going up 44% and sales of the Immerse Bible going up 60%, compared to this time last year.

<http://frontlinesohio.com/index.php/2020/04/13/ashland-faith-leaders-converge-for-prayer-at-city-hall-during-pandemic-video/>

It's Time to WORSHIP AGAIN

The Plan to Return to Worship as a body of Believers at the Church

START DATE:

Sunday, May 3rd, 2020 @ 10:45 am

FORMAT OF WORSHIP:

We will only be meeting in the auditorium for that day and several weeks after that. We are easing back into congregational worship life slowly.

(No Sunday Schools classes, No nursery or Toddler's or Jr. Church)

Streaming Online Services will continue (indefinitely)

PREPARATIONS FOR WORSHIP: [The protocol for returning to worship as a church.]

1. Sanitize your hands before you attend.
2. Your temperature will be taken inside the main entrance upon your arrival. If you have any kind of abnormal temperature reading, you will be asked to isolate in another room with a monitor or you may return to your home.
3. You will be provided a mask to wear at your discretion, it is not required to be worn.
4. You may sit with your immediate family members only. All guests not related must sit or stand 6ft from one another.
5. You will have the option of gloves.
6. We discourage all physical contact with hugging, handshakes, etc.

Disclaimers:

1. COMMUNION, should be handsfree or drive-in; it is discouraged to conduct it in the building.
2. PEW BIBLES AND HYMN BOOKS, should be sanitized after use. It is preferred for parishioners to bring their own Bibles.

Our worship service will be the same length as the online services we have been broadcasting the past few weeks. We are sensitive to time because we have no children's ministry services available. Families are sitting together at home anyway.

This protocol is proposed on Thursday, April 16, 2020

1st:

2nd:

Vote:

Chairman, Elder/Deacon

Vice Chair, Elder/Deacon

Pastor

4/16/2020 Per discussion and review with Jill Hartson of the Ashland County Health Department