Basic Information About the Coronavirus Epidemic

The current outbreak of a respiratory illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus has been called COVID-19 (coronavirus disease-2019). First identified in Wuhan city in China at the end of December 2019. The virus has spread rapidly throughout the world, including the US. At this time, we have no specific medicines to treat the illness nor vaccines to prevent it; these are both aggressively being worked on.

COVID-19 tends to be much milder in young persons, who may have minimal symptoms. However, the severity of illness increases with age or underlying medical problems. The most common symptoms include fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Persons appear to be most contagious early in the illness when symptoms are mild and appear like a typical "cold."

So, what can we do to help prevent contracting and spreading the illness?
1. The biggest thing you can do is to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (the time it takes to say the Lord's Prayer). Dry hands well, preferably with paper towels. You can also use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
2. Avoid touching your face.
3. Cover coughs or sneezes with tissue, then throw tissue in the trash.
4. Avoid close contact with others, especially those who may have traveled to other areas or who show any symptoms.
5. Avoid gatherings in groups.

For more information and resources, you can also follow the CDC's coverage.

As Christians, we need not be fearful. Our trust is ultimately in God. As we face these difficult and uncertain times, let us watch for ways to serve others and to share with them about "the peace that passes all understanding" that we have in Jesus.

Grace,
Tony and Jo Ann