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August 31, 2020

Dear Cambria Baptist Church Family and Friends,

I pray that this unusual year has drawn you closer to God. It is easy in this time to become frustrated, impatient, anxious, exasperated, and selfish. Yet, we are reminded that God is in sovereign control of all things and that as such he has sovereignly ordained these past five months for our good. If we can serve you in any way as you walk through these troubled waters, please do not hesitate to let us know.

We typically start our AWANA program the first week of October. This means that the planning process typically begins at the start of August. For obvious reasons, this has been a different year. When we suspended AWANA in March, we had all hoped that the COVID19 pandemic and all that has come with it would have subsided by this time. Frankly, we all probably expected that. It has not. Our leadership here at Cambria has been thinking particularly about the AWANA program over the past month.

This last week we sent out a survey to our AWANA workers to help us understand their positions as we considered our options. I am very grateful for the many adults in our church who regularly invest in our children. I am particularly thankful for so many of our senior saints who sacrificially work with our children. While the COVID virus has not significantly impacted children in Hillsdale county (Only eight school age children have reportedly contracted the virus to this point. We wait to see if the opening of schools will change that), the virus has proved potent to our older citizens. The death rate in Hillsdale county moves to 22% at the age of 70. In the state the rate moves to 21% at age 60 (and 35% for age 70). With this in mind, we have some concerns about the real threat of exposure to our older workers. The survey revealed that many of them are also concerned about this threat. Further, because of the size of our AWANA program, it is not feasible to run the program without these workers.

We considered moving the start date back one month to consider what happens over the next month. However, that moves the AWANA start date to November. Which means the program would immediately be interrupted by the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. As a result, the Deacon Board voted unanimously to begin the AWANA program the first week of January. While we typically end the AWANA year in April, we will end the AWANA year the first week of June. This will allow the program to last much closer to our normal length. We know that this is unwelcome news to many of you. It is not something we desired to do. However, we have a strong responsibility to the workers who have given of themselves for so many years.

Our conversations about our response to the COVID pandemic have been centered around several Biblical principles. These can be viewed on our website. Several of these principles are very important as you view this decision. It is important not to fear but to trust in God (Psalm 46; Phil. 4:6-7). However, faith does not negate our responsibility to care for the most



vulnerable among us (Matt 25:34-39; Jam 2:14-17; 1 Jn 3:11; Phil 4:3-4) and to take necessary precautions (Matt 22:39; Phil 2:3-4; Lk 14:28). Our church leadership believes that this decision is the necessary one to fulfill obey these principles.

I did want to end this letter on a positive note. The children who were on pace to complete their books this last year will receive the appropriate book award as if they finished it. Once we have the awards and determined the best way to present them to the children, we will notify you of our plans. Further, as we get closer to the end of the year, we will notify you of the details regarding our AWANA opening. If you have any questions, please contact me. We look forward to serving your children again in the near future.

In Christ

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dave", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Dave

