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November 25, 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 this past year 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.

Back in August we delayed the start of AWANA until January 2021, 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. In fact, it seems to have resurged in a unique way. As a result, 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 sixteen AWANA age children have reportedly contracted the virus to this point), the virus has proved potent to our older citizens. Further, the infection rate in our community is increasing at an alarming speed. With this in mind, we have some concerns. We are concerned 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 are also concerned about the real possibility of accidental exposure of all involved (an individual is contagious at least two days prior to showing symptoms) which could threaten the ability of our local community schools to remain open. Finally, we are concerned about the mitigation steps we would have to take in order to protect everyone and the impact that would have on the kind of program we can present.

As a result, this week the Deacon Board voted unanimously with my agreement to cancel the 2020-21 AWANA year. This was a very hard decision. Cambria has held AWANA continuously for over 30 years. Our current AWANA commander and former AWANA commander both serve on the Deacon Board. However, we believe this is the wisest decision to make. Yet, we did not want to leave our children with nothing. As a result, the board also unanimously agreed to two proposals. First, should God see fit to resolve this COVID situation in the spring, we will open up a modified children's program. While the schedule will not allow us to run an AWANA program, we will offer an alternative. Heather is already working diligently on putting this program together. Second, we will be holding an extra special kickoff to next year's AWANA program. Funds have been approved to create a spectacular event to welcome everyone back. Stay tuned in the next few months for details regarding this exciting event.



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 these decisions are the necessary ones to fulfill obey these principles. 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

