



THE CITY OF OXFORD

March 30, 2020

MAYOR'S UPDATE RE: COVID-19

If you've watched the news or been to the grocery store, you've no doubt witnessed the NEW world we're living in because of the Coronavirus. We are fully feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic now. In previous weeks, perhaps, it seemed like something that was going on somewhere else, but now with 14 confirmed cases in Lafayette County, 847 in Mississippi, and 16 deaths, we are faced with a very daunting reality. And as I have said before, I believe our positive cases exceed 14 and I fear this gives our community a false sense of security.

As this story unfolds, it becomes clear that no one is immune to the effects regardless of age, race, socioeconomic status or geographic location. The social and economic disruptions will be deep, broad and long-lasting.

This is when we need each other the most. In the face of an overwhelming tidal wave of bad news, and fear, frustration, uncertainty and finger-pointing, what we need right now is faith and compassion for each other. We need reminders of what's good about our community and our country. And we need to rise to this challenge.

We have made some hard decisions as community leaders and will continue to require further measures as necessary.

As so many in our community are facing fear and physical isolation, it is essential that we find ways to connect with others and share our collective knowledge of solutions. We are part of a greater community, and we have a greater purpose – to emerge from this crisis with the tools to build a better world. There are people stepping up across our community to do just that.

There are churches organizing deliveries to people who can't get out right now to get groceries or prescriptions.

There are sewing groups making masks to meet the need for our first responders and healthcare workers.

There are businesses offering free meals to those in need.

There are transit drivers continuing to deliver Meals on Wheels throughout the City and County.

There are cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and teachers showing up to prepare and distribute food to kids across our community five days a week.

There are first responders and healthcare workers leaving their families every day to protect and care for all of us.

There are volunteers at the Pantry working three days a week to make sure groceries are available to those who need it most.

There are people making kind gestures and finding compromises on debt and payments due that will get us through to the other side of this crisis.

There are businesses donating much needed supplies.

There are artists and musicians performing free shows for your enjoyment as part of the YAC Stay at Home Festival.

There are citizens donating to the United Way Coronavirus fund and supporting local businesses by ordering from restaurants that are still serving our community by curbside pick-up/delivery and drive thru options.

There are citizens supporting local businesses and hospitality industry workers by participating in virtual tipping programs that you can find at visitoxfordms.com.

There are citizens checking on disabled friends, elderly neighbors, people who live alone and letting them know that they are loved.

I even had a message today from someone who typically travels for work but is now home for the unforeseeable future volunteer to mow grass to help us keep up.

Our community truly is amazing.

The sense of being a part of something bigger can help ease our feelings of separation and loneliness, while ensuring that we are taking care of each other in the best ways we can.

Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed by fear or anxiety that we don't even know where to start to show kindness and compassion. Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood who knows a lot about being a good neighbor may have said it best: "We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."

No act is too small, or too simple to bring someone comfort. Now is a chance for all of us to act heroically.

We are a resilient, strong community. In this crisis, I see people caring for each other and our community building relationships and bonds that will be in place even when this pandemic passes. And for that I am grateful.

We are stronger together.