

# Gov. Reynolds talks COVID-19 with pastors

On Tuesday, March 23, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds joined over 230 Iowa pastors in a conference call coordinated by The FAMiLY Leader Foundation.

The call included encouragement, prayer, questions, and sharing ways churches can come alongside state government to aid communities hit hard by the coronavirus crisis.

“Thank you for reaching out and asking, ‘What can we do?’ and, ‘Here’s what we can provide.’ I can’t tell you how much that means to my team; I can’t tell you how much comfort that brings us,” the governor said on the call. “And to all the pastors on the call right now, thank you for how much you’re doing to meet the needs of your community, not only the individuals in your congregation, but those outside your congregation as well – to pray, support, and help them in this time of crisis.”

The governor updated the pastors on her approach to the crisis, on the latest testing and data, protections in place for healthcare providers, and more. She also answered pastor questions on aid for church employees and her ban on large community gatherings, including most church services.

“I was grateful to be on the call to hear the words and sense the heart of our governor as she works through the difficult decisions related to the crisis,” said Pastor Tim Lubinus, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, afterward. “I also appreciated the valuable information that I gained from being on the call that will help me as I lead others.”

At the pastors’ request, Gov. Reynolds also shared key community needs the government has identified and ways the

church can help.

“You guys have been very proactive,” the governor affirmed. “There are countless stories of churches and faith communities that are donating resources and time to food banks, to delivering groceries, to childcare for our front-line workers, and the list goes on.”

The governor praised The FAMiLY Leader Foundation’s work recruiting churches to aid Iowa food banks and to provide temporary childcare centers for the families of first responders, health officials, and other essential-services workers.

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She also touched on the simple, prayer-and-care needs that go far beyond the government’s ability to help.

“We have vulnerable, elderly people who are home. So reach out to them, see if they need you to pick up groceries or to get medicine for them,” she said. “I know you’re already doing so much in communities across our state. So just keep doing what you’re doing; it’s really appreciated.”

“Gov. Reynolds demonstrated the heart of a leader on our call,” said Bob Vander Plaats, president and CEO of The FAMiLY Leader. “It was very apparent that she was moved by the abundance and power of prayer and at the willingness of the shepherds of God’s Church to team with her as shepherd of God’s government to meet local community needs. Gov. Reynolds is leading with compassion, wisdom and diligence. I can’t think of anyone better to lead Iowa at this time.”

After the call, TFL spoke with several pastors who were grateful for the opportunity, not only to have their questions answered, but also to hear from the governor personally.

“I was greatly encouraged to hear Governor Reynolds’ heart for the people of Iowa and her deep appreciation for the prayers of Christians in Iowa,” said Pastor Marcus Bratsch of River of Life Church in Cedar Rapids. “It’s a privilege to have her leading our state and to intercede for her and for all our governmental leaders as they face incredibly difficult decisions during this time of crisis.”

“Thank you so much for setting up that conference call with Gov. Reynolds,” said Pastor Michael Demastus of Fort Des Moines Church of Christ. “It was a deep encouragement to me to hear her heart. Praying very hard for her.”

For the past six years, The FAMiLY Leader Foundation’s Church Ambassador Network has been building intentional relationships between the shepherds of God’s church (pastors) and the shepherds of government (elected officials). The goal is for the shepherds to build into each other as people, as fellow shepherds, and as partners in meeting community needs – a model that is now being replicated by Church Ambassador Networks in 10 other states beyond Iowa.



Dr. Bill Artherholt

During her tenure both as lieutenant governor and now as governor, Reynolds has kindly welcomed pastors into her office to encourage her, pray for her, as well as find ways to meet

community needs together. Now, TFL's investment in shepherd-to-shepherd relationships has created the opportunity to set up the conference call with Iowa pastors.

The call concluded with Dr. Bill Artherholt – who has been a part of every meeting TFL's Church Ambassador Network has had with Gov. Reynolds – leading the pastors in prayer for the governor.

“We've been blessed for the past six years to develop a relationship between Gov. Reynolds and Iowa pastors,” explains Greg Baker, vice president of church engagement for The FAMiLY Leader and executive director of TFL's Church Ambassador Network. “Our heart was to use this call to encourage both Gov. Reynolds and Iowa pastors. This has been a difficult time for both of them, and this call was an excellent opportunity for them to bless each other.”