

March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This official communication comes to you from your pastors Carl, Caleb and Dean, (in the midst of our Senior leadership transition), and your Ruling elders. We believe it timely and necessary to inform you of our thoughts and decisions regarding our preemptive response to the growing national alarm over the COVID-19 virus that is spreading without respect to borders or boundaries. First, we want to address our hearts before the Lord to encourage you. Second, we outline what our clear response will be going forward. Please forgive the length of this letter, but it is important!

As to our hearts, please hear the Lord's comfort from His unchanging eternal Word!

Psalm 40:16-17 ~ 'May those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the Lord!" As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and deliverer; do not delay, O my God!'

Psalm 46:1, 2, 10 ~ God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea...Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 23:1, 4 ~ "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and staff, they comfort me. Surely goodness and everlasting loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life."

Romans 8: 35, 37-39 ~ "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels or rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Dear Ones, our hope is that these great truths of scripture will fortify your hearts with God's sovereign power over all things, and with the presence of His love and help even in the hardest of places. The Church is much larger than any health crisis and will outlast even the most viral

of troubles. Our Triune God remains now in these days where always He has been – ruling and reigning justly over His dominion for His own praise and the good of His people.

However, living in this bold faith with great courage does not mean we live without discernment and wisdom. The Scripture tells us that the whole law of God is summed up in two great commands – to love the Lord with our entire life, and our neighbor as ourself! We have both the joy and obligation of loving the Lord in our corporate worship AND the responsibility to love our fellow congregants and broader community simultaneously. Therefore, your staff and elders are implementing the following changes in our corporate life together, effective Tuesday, March 17.

First, we will discontinue assembling in person for corporate worship through Sunday, April 5, which is Palm Sunday. May the Lord make it possible for us to gather on Easter Sunday. This April 5 date gives us clarity for the next 3 Sundays, and allows the elders enough longer-term visibility to revisit further decisions before Easter and communicate with you again about future dates.

Second, we will live-stream morning and evening worship each Sunday we are apart on the following schedule:

- 8:30 a.m. service will be live-streamed for all to watch at that time. It is viewable through our church website link/YouTube link/or Facebook link. Note: the service is then automatically available to be viewed anytime thereafter. Members, friends, etc., may view that service at anytime on Sunday or another day.
- 6:00 p.m. service will be live-streamed and then available thereafter for later viewing.
- We will be posting the bulletin music words on our website, so you may download for use at home.

Third, the Session has suspended all on campus ministries of the church concurrent with all weeks where gathered worship is suspended (with the exception of CCS which will make their own scheduling decisions). There will be no on campus ministries of the church of any kind. WE DO encourage small groups and other studies in homes to continue as people are willing and able. We know this is a great inconvenience and a great disappointment to our hearts. But we believe this is a necessary precaution to ensure the health of our faith family and broader community.

Fourth, the functional transition of our pastoral succession to Caleb's leadership remains on schedule as of Sunday afternoon, March 22. Caleb will function fully as our Senior Pastor from that point onward. The Presbytery service which will formally change Caleb's and Carl's roles has been rescheduled for mid-May. The elders have asked Carl to take the six-week sabbatical as was planned. Carl will be out March 23-May 3.

Fifth, the elders and pastoral staff will be calling our senior members regularly to check on and pray for them. We encourage all of us to do so!

Sixth, the church finance team will communicate with you soon about what the best ways are to maintain your faithful giving of tithes and offerings. (surface mail, electronic giving, drop off during office hours, etc.)

And finally, your ministry staff will be offering the following two helps throughout the week for your continued spiritual growth.

- 1) On Mon/Tues/Thurs/Friday of each week we will post a daily written devotional tool for you to make use of. Visit our church website to locate that for your edification throughout these weeks.
- 2) On Wednesdays at noon during this continuing season (starting tomorrow, March 18) we will live-stream a 15-20 minute Bible Study by the ministry team that we encourage you to tune in to watch. Pastor Carl will lead the first Bible study devotion on Psalm 46.

Dear Ones, these are highly unusual days of the Lord's providential dealings with the nations. Please pray that His glory would shine forth, that gospel mercies would burst forth, and that He would comfort and fortify His people as we concretely and sacrificially love one another.

Gratefully and affectionately yours,

Pastor Carl