

Dear Grace Fellowship Family:

We are certain that, by now, most of you are aware of the executive order from our Governor restricting groups from meeting together that contain more than 50. You are also aware that, here in Michigan, that bars, gyms, theaters, and many other public facilities where individuals gather are to be closed. Restaurants will be open, only for drive thru or pick-up. On the heels of this executive order (only a few hours later), the President, through the advice of the CDC, has encouraged Americans not to meet in groups of 10 or more, and he has instructed older people or those with serious underlying conditions to stay at home.

The speed with which these new restrictions have come to us is somewhat mind boggling. Last Saturday, before our Sunday service, the restrictions were for meetings above 250 people; and by early afternoon Monday, the new, far more limiting restrictions have become the new reality.

Navigating through this is not easy. As I said on Sunday, there are a variety of opinions about how our government is responding to this crisis; and whether we agree or disagree with the limitations on gathering, God calls us to submit to the plan that has been enacted in order to do our part to help curb the spread of the virus. Our government is not asking us to sin, or to deny Christ, or stop preaching the gospel. They are asking us to participate in social distancing, and by submitting to their leadership, we are demonstrating love to those around us, especially to those who are in high risk categories.

As of Tuesday, 3/17 at noon, we are canceling all services at church. So there will be no Wednesday PM meeting or any Sunday meetings. We will be listening carefully to the state and federal government's recommendations in the weeks ahead for how long this will last. Since we will not be meeting face to face, we still want to stay in contact with all of our members and attenders. In the future, you will be receiving a phone call from one of the elders or deacons who will be checking in, to see if you are okay. Let me, also, encourage you to check on one another, and pray for one another. We can still bear each other's burdens throughout the week, even if we don't see each other face to face.

It is really amazing that in God's providence, a microscopic virus could create such havoc, not just in the United States, but in the entire world. Nearly every part of our society that the vast majority of people run to for comfort, entertainment, and significance has been shut down. Could you have ever imagined that March Madness, the NBA, hockey and baseball would be completely shut down? Or that our Educational institutions would be closed? Broadway closed? New release movies on hold? One of the headlines that was on a news feed said, "Now, what are we going to watch?"

Sadly, if you are paying attention, there is no one on a national level that has suggested that we need to cry out to God for help. Instead we are hearing, "we have great minds in the CDC; great people in government, and great leaders in the private sector. WE can resolve this problem." We are grateful for great minds. God gifts people and has allowed man to come up with many, many things in the medical field to help us, heal us, and protect us. But, we must always remember, "**God** gifts people and he has allowed..." We really do need to pray that during this national and international crisis that we can point people lovingly and graciously to "our only hope in life and death, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let me encourage you, if you are not sure what to watch or listen to for Sunday morning worship, to worship at Parkside Church. If you go to Youtube and search for Parkside Church you can find any of their current and past services to choose from. Or you can go straight to their website www.parksidechurch.com. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call.

And, above all, pray. Pray, daily, for God to reveal Himself to those around us. Pray for God to meet the needs of believers who are suffering. Pray for protection. Pray for provision. Pray for sustenance. Pray for mercy. Ask God for wisdom on what you can do to serve those who are hurting inside and outside the church. And, pray for a genuine revival in our area of the country. May God revive the church, give us a greater desire to live for Christ. And, may that spill over into the community. So that we begin to see many unbelieving men, women and children become committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In His faithful care,

Pastor Rick & Brad

Elders/Deacons – please call with any needs or concerns

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