

Dear Good News Fellowship Family and Friends,

Out of sincere love for our neighbors we are cancelling all in-person services for the foreseeable future. Your elders have spent a lot of time reading, praying, and discussing whether or not we ought to continue Sunday gatherings. Here is a summary of my thinking:

1. We believe we ought to do all we can to meet together.

Hebrews 10:24–25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

That said, a temporary suspension of services is nothing new. We have canceled services many times over the years for inclement weather.

2. We also believe in prudence

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

We want to listen carefully to medical experts, specialists and other church leaders. We are not experts in the spread of a virus, but we have sought to read and listen to all the reliable sources available to us.

A couple of points about COVID-19 seem to us to be important considerations.

1. A person can carry the virus and be actively spreading it through droplets (sneezes, coughs, unwashed hands, etc) even when they show no symptoms of being sick.
2. Studies of the Chinese incident rate have shown that on some days when hundreds of cases were being reported, there were actually thousands of people infected. The approach of the authorities to limit almost all contact is likely the key factor in what has led to a containment.
3. WA State has mandated no gatherings over 50 people and the president has recommended no gatherings over 10 people.

3. Love

Finally, we are trying to be very mindful of the command to love our neighbor. For example, a religious sect in South Korea ignored government recommendations against meeting and became one of the worst sources of the spread of the COVID-19 in that country.

Conclusions

For all of these reasons and more we are suspending in-person services. As Pastor Francis Grimke said after the Spanish Flu epidemic in Washington D.C. in 1918,

"There has been considerable grumbling, I know, on the part of some, particularly in regard to the closing of the churches. It seems to me, however, in a matter like this it is always wise to submit to such restrictions for the time being. If, as a matter of fact, it was dangerous to meet in theatres and in the schools, it certainly was no less dangerous to meet in churches. The fact that the churches were places of religious gathering, and the others not, would not affect in the least the health question involved. If avoiding crowds lessens the danger of being infected, it was wise to take the precaution and not needlessly run in danger, and expect God to protect us."

Online Services

Thankfully, we have an advantage over those saints who lived through the Spanish Flu. The internet! So, we are working to provide a video of a corporate worship service for Sunday mornings at 10:00am. We're also working on putting together household worship toolkits so that you can lead your household in worship.

Here are several links to stay connected:

GNF Youtube

Page: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwI6bZEjzeTVGp8aJe3Q7Fg>

GNF Website: <https://www.goodnewsfellowship.org/>

GNF Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GoodNewsFellowshipChurch/>

Giving

If you normally give in physical form, we're so thankful for your generosity. Please continue your cheerful giving online here: <https://www.goodnewsfellowship.org/donate>. This will ensure our church continues to thrive as we prayerfully consider how to move forward during this time. Or you can mail or drop-off checks.

Prayer and Care

- Let's use the void left by cancelled sporting events, worship services, and even work as a time to seek the face of God. Pray for your country. Pray for all the healthcare workers (many in our own church) that will

likely be exposed to the virus and stand in higher risk. Pray for God to show us mercy and to spare lives. Pray for one another.

- The next few weeks may prove to be a financial difficulty for those whose jobs will be affected. If you are in need of financial assistance from the benevolence fund please e-mail office@goodnewsfellowship.org or call any of the elders.
- I think we underestimate the power of words to “encourage the fainthearted” and “help the weak” (1 Thess. 5:14). When we check in with our friends and family through phone calls, texts and social media, we can strengthen them to face struggles ahead.

Along with our elders, I will be praying for you during these weeks when we are apart. If there are ways that we can care for you during this time, please get in touch with myself, any of the elders, or call the church office.

Your Pastor,

Luke LeViere