

March 17, 2020



Dear Morrellville Church family,

As you've been aware, our world is in a bit of upheaval surrounding the COVID-19 virus. I want to take a moment to address our response to this situation.

On Monday afternoon, Governor Wolf issued a recommendation that non-essential business and gatherings be suspended for at least two weeks. President Trump along with the CDC have recommended gatherings of 10 or more be suspended as well.

Our board met on Monday night to address these recommendations. After much prayer and discussion, we decided we will follow the authorities' recommendations and suspend our weekly gatherings until further notice is given to us by the governing bodies and the CDC. This includes mid week gatherings like the Break and choir practice.

I want to be very clear on this decision.

1) It was **not** taken lightly. There was very real and heartfelt discussion for and against suspending our meetings. The board realizes that our weekly gatherings are important to so many of us in our spiritual lives.

2) It was **not** made out of fear. We hold faith that we have not been given a spirit of fear, but a spirit of boldness. We are not afraid of anything the world throws at us because we know Who stands behind us.

3) It **was** made from a respect of the duly appointed authorities that have been placed over us. (Romans 13:1) We recognize that the CDC and governmental bodies are not the final authority in our lives as Christians, but we are called to obey when the laws of the land do not go against the commands of our God.

4) It **was** made in order to show love for our members and neighbors who may be more vulnerable to this virus.

We love you all, and we love seeing and worshiping with you, but we want all of you to be safe and well. Although we will not be gathering together at the church building, we will continue to BE THE CHURCH.

I want to encourage you to view this as a time to be creative in the ways we worship, serve, and remain involved in each other's lives. Take this time to pray for our brothers and sisters, pray for our children who don't always understand this, pray for our country as we are facing new hurdles each day, and pray for our church as we find new ways to do God's work.

We are working on a short term and longer term plan to address the work of the church moving forward. This is new territory for us as well as everyone around us. We have been gathering ideas, organizing, and trying to make new things happen. I'm sure we'll have some success as well as some struggles to make our ideas a reality. In all of this I am confident; we will have everything we need to do the things God has for us to do.

Some of the ideas we're working on include:

Pre-recorded messages. The technology is still being gathered to do this. It will most likely be streamed on Facebook as well as our website. We realize not everyone in our church has access to this technology so we're working on other ways of doing this as well.

Collecting Resources. We are in the process of finding resources to distribute to our members and the community as they have need. (Think non-perishable food items, toiletries, etc) The board has voted to release funds to make this happen. **If you need assistance, or know of someone who needs these resources,** please call Tawnya (814) 421-6140 or Dan (814) 244-5470 or call the church and leave a message.

Spreading Peace. We are going to be spreading messages of peace and hope on our social media sites. We see social media as a major source of spreading panic and false information in this crisis. We are going to do our part to combat this with Scripture and hope from a God who has us in His hands even in the midst of chaos. If you are on social media, we encourage you to do the same. Check your posts for factual information from trusted sites like the CDC. Just because someone posted it, doesn't make it true.

Inter-church Communication. We are working on a plan to make sure we are still in contact with each other as a church. We realize the lack of physically meeting with each other is not good for our spiritual health. We are ironing out the details of a phone or text message system to make sure we are all checking in with each other.

Worship Resources. We're joining with some other local churches to provide weekly resources online as well as through the mail.

Giving. We believe that giving is a spiritual act. It allows us to literally put our money where our mouth is. By continuing to give generously, we acknowledge that God is in control of our circumstance. To that end, we have set up an online giving system. It can be found on our website **morrellvillecob.com**

Prayer. We want you to use this time to pray. Pray for boldness, healing, wisdom, peace, calm, and anything else God leads you to. We believe God listens when we pray. Prayer contains power. Ask for a lot of that! Spend time in silence, listening for God's voice.

My encouragement for us during this time is to look at this as an opportunity for creativity. We've talked about getting out from the walls of our building.... well family, we're out from our walls, whether we like it or not. Now is the time to let our light shine out to a dark and dying world. Now is the time to step up and show the world why the love of God is unique.

We do not fear a virus or a world of uncertainty.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock" (Psalm 27:1-5)

My encouragement for us is to realize that we've been getting fed for the past 100 years in the building on Chandler Ave. It's time to step out and feed our neighborhood.

Out of difficult times, the first church spread. Let's go and be the church.

Blessings,
Pastor Dan



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