

March 13, 2020

Dear WPMC Family,

This has been an interesting week, hasn't it?

I'll admit that my personal response to the events has certainly covered the gamut. ***In the final analysis, however, we are choosing to cancel all church gatherings and events – beginning tomorrow (Saturday, March 14) and running through next Saturday evening (March 20.)***

We will continue monitoring the situation and likely make a decision late next week about future events and gatherings. The church office will be open according to its normal schedule.

Why? Well, after much consultation with other local churches, institutions (and with some of our own medical professionals - doctors and nurses – some even this morning who are working first-hand with this virus) here is my understanding:

- Covid-19 is roughly two times more contagious than the common flu.
- It lasts far longer in the air and on surfaces.
- Far more people will actually "catch" it (than the common flu) due to its newness - there is no innate immunity in our bodies to it yet.
- Some won't even know they have it, but those are the ones most likely to spread it to the populations of persons for whom it is far more dangerous.
- Although percentages cannot yet be known due to testing irregularities, the death rate of Covid-19 is markedly higher than that of the common flu for those over 60, and especially for men over 80.

Not having worship or other church gatherings won't stop the virus' spread – it's going to spread and many will contract it. But we want to do all we can to slow its spread (flatten the curve, if you will) so medical professionals can most adequately care for those in most need. We want to cooperate with the efforts of our society and demonstrate that Christ-followers are very willing to make sacrifices for our neighbors' well-being.

Please believe me - this was not an easy decision to reach, and I know that some will disagree. Just the same, with all things considered, we believe that it is the most responsible decision in the long term, and we make it not in fear, but for the sake of compassion for those most vulnerable.

As I have already written, these are interesting times. In these days when the pace of life has been slowed for (some of) us, why not take the time and reconnect with family? Use the gift we've been given to encourage and engage. Let the Lord speak through our upturned schedules. Lead an informal time of worship for your family or with a couple friends on Sunday.

Through it all, may the Lord reveal himself in the midst of our dark and broken world...and may He do it through His body, the Church, acting in love.

We'll all miss seeing each other on Sunday, but we'll all see each other again soon.

Pastor Daryl