



Dear Prairie View family,

Please read the following message from the PVCC Elders and Staff:

### **THE SITUATION**

By now, you've seen the countless ways the COVID-19 (AKA, the Coronavirus) crisis is upending numerous areas of life in our society. This includes schools, sports, government, economics, and most obviously, healthcare. Churches are also being affected.

COVID-19 is a highly infective virus. While the overall health risk of COVID-19 is low for most people, it can be very dangerous for some smaller demographics (namely those who are older, or have preexisting medical conditions).

On Thursday, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb announced that, in an effort to reduce and slow the spread of COVID-19, non-essential gatherings must be limited to less than 250 people. In addition, Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness (on a conference call with local church leaders, which Senior Minister Ben Halliburton participated in) requested that Fishers churches cancel as many public gatherings as possible. On Friday, President Trump enacted a national state of emergency. Finally, our own Carl Pafford (an experienced doctor and trusted PVCC Elder) advised that we cancel our Sunday morning service for March 15.

### **THE DECISION**

**In light of this situation, the PVCC Elders have decided to cancel our worship service on Sunday, March 15. We have also decided to cancel all other church events between Friday, March 13, and Saturday, March 21. This includes a Men's Breakfast, all Small Groups, a Missions Team meeting, Youth Group, and a Women's Study.**

We did not arrive at this decision easily. We understand the various arguments for and against such a drastic step (from theological, pastoral, and logistical angles), and understand that you may not agree with this decision. However, we are in uncharted territory, and we've made this decision in an effort to protect the flock God has entrusted us with, and to love our neighbors by doing our part to reduce and slow the spread of COVID-19.

## THE PLAN

This week, Ben will preach the sermon he prepared for Sunday, March 15, and we will make that sermon available for you digitally to listen to on your own time. Marc will also recommend worship songs for the congregation to listen to. Finally, Ben and Zach will write and share devotionals throughout the week to help fill the void of missed times of communal study and prayer. Zach will also share resources with parents of children in Kids Kingdom.

**We recognize (and emphasize) that this plan is not the equivalent of physically worshipping together on Sunday morning. Thus, to be frank, we don't want you to get too comfortable with it. This is a temporary plan, enacted for extraordinary circumstances, in an effort to continue offering spiritual care for our church (even if this form is less than ideal).**

## QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

*"How long will this last?"*

- **We don't know yet.** For now, we're taking things one week at a time. As Sunday, March 22 approaches, we will reevaluate our situation, make the appropriate decision, and share it with you in a timely manner.

*"What about Communion?"*

- Of the many experiences of Sunday morning worship, the corporate taking of Communion may be the one most difficult to adapt to our current predicament. However, we'll say this:
  - We do not believe the bread, juice, cups, or plates at PVCC are uniquely "blessed". What makes Communion significant is the intentional gathering together of God's people to remember Christ's broken body and shed blood on the cross for our sins by eating and drinking.
    - **Therefore, we would encourage you to find a way to take Communion at home.** Whether you're by yourself, or with parents, a spouse, or children who also believe in Jesus – take a moment to remember Christ's broken body and shed blood, and eat and drink. If you have unleavened bread and grape juice, great! If you need to make do with something else, that's OK too.

### *“What about Offering?”*

- We currently do not have an online option for giving to PVCC. Therefore, we would encourage you to mail your offering to the church, or save it for the next Sunday we’re physically together (whenever that may be).
  - We also recognize that the economic impact of COVID-19 has not yet been fully felt. **If COVID-19 results in a significant financial setback for you or your family (for example, due to lost hours at work, extra childcare expenses, or unexpected healthcare expenses), we encourage you to adjust your giving appropriately to take care of basic needs for yourself or your family.**
    - Giving to your local church remains a Biblical command from God. We’re all finding ways to obey this command in this situation.

### *“What about Pastoral Care?”*

- The fact that we are not meeting in person for some time does not change the fact that we are still a church family. Talk to each other through email, texts, phone calls, or social media.
  - If you need help – whether it’s picking up groceries or prescriptions, financial assistance, or a private visit from a Pastor or Elder for prayer – let us know. While we might be seeing less of each other face to face, we are not abandoning each other.
    - And, of course – **PRAY** – for each other, our church, our community, our state, our nation, and our world.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

In recent days, I have seen **Matthew 6:34** cited frequently (and rightfully so):

*“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

There are many anxious people in our world right now; you may be one of them. But I would challenge you to trust God through this trial. **Jesus’s words do not assure us that anxiety-inducing troubles will never come; rather, his words encourage and remind us to trust our good and sovereign God through our troubles.**

In **Matthew 10**, Jesus warns his disciples about the possibility of violent persecution (that could even result in death). But Jesus also reminds the disciples that the Father knows how many hairs are on their heads. In other words, God sees them, knows them, and loves

them – and thus, in the big scheme of things, they have no reason to fear. The same is true of us.

Sincerely,

Your shepherds, servants, leaders, siblings in Christ, and friends,

*Ben Halliburton (Senior Minister)*  
*Zach Ellsworth (Associate Minister)*  
*Marc Imboden (Worship Minister)*  
*Nancy Kinsey (Administrative Assistant)*  
*Craig Hunter (Elder Chair)*

*Rick Aton (Elder)*  
*Terry Blaker (Elder)*  
*Joe Fenimore (Elder in Training)*  
*Carl Pafford (Elder)*  
*Joshua Walker (Elder)*