

I've spent the day consulting with our staff, local authorities and the hospital. All have agreed with our state and federal authorities that we should close our building for at least the next two weeks which includes all mid-week programming as well.

Your safety is important to us but let me be clear, that is not our top priority. I'm not trying to be insensitive but our top priority here at FCC is to honor the Lord.

At first glance, there may appear to only be two choices before us.

1. **Fear:** close everything down and not meet at all.
2. **Maintain:** ride this out till things get back to normal

We are not doing either one.

This is an unprecedented event, which means we have an unprecedented opportunity.

The church is not a building. The church is the gathering of God's people. We are going to still gather but it will look different. It may help for us to remember how we experienced church at city hall and at the junior high a few months ago. I believe God has been preparing us for this very time. For most people in our community this is a very unsettling time. This is a perfect opportunity to show love, concern and service to our neighbors. I liken it to that bond you feel after a big snow storm and we all help each other shovel driveways.

We will have more details next week, but for now this is what you need to know.

Of course, if you are feeling sick in any way or feel the need to be quarantined, please stay home. For the rest of us this is our plan for at least the next two weeks. We will gather in smaller venues like our homes. There is nothing saying we can't do this. This is exactly the kind of thing many of your neighbors will be craving. As for now, this is what Sunday will look like. You will gather in your living room with others from church, family members, friends and neighbors. We will do these 3 things together:

1. We will worship. Worship can look a lot of different ways. Maybe it's through prayer or maybe you sing along to some worship music off the computer
2. We will take communion: Honestly, communion is best practiced around a table, or in smaller circles anyway. I'm actually kind of excited about that.
3. We will listen to my sermon on Facebook live at 9am.

I want to remind you that the one thing that has consistently been a catalyst for church growth worldwide is when the church is forced to meet differently. That's why countries that are not democratic or even face persecution almost always seem to thrive. I believe God will use this season as an opportunity for his church to grow nationwide. As for us, I have 3 goals for the upcoming weeks.

1. That our worship would be deeper: instead of feeling like we are going through the motions we get to lean on Jesus in fresh ways.
2. That our community would be tighter: there is an incredible bond that is felt when we come together for a greater good.
3. That our influence would be wider: I've prepared a message for Sunday that will address the peace that comes from Jesus. For your friends, family and neighbors who would never come to church normally. I think many of them will come to your house. Especially in this time to receive a message of peace.

FCC, do not fear. I want you to join me in anticipation and excitement for what God is about to do. He has indeed prepared us for such a time as this.

Peace,

Pete Cocco