

As you may have already heard, our Governor, Mr. Jared Polis, has issued an emergency directive designed to arrest the spread of COVID-19. The Elders wanted you to know what our plans are for the foreseeable future.

First, note this portion of the Governor's Public Health Order, which contained the below orders, and other information and directives:

Order # 1: Effective at 12:01 AM on March 19, 2020, all mass gatherings shall be limited to no more than ten (10) people. Gatherings subject to this Order include, but are not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, sporting events with spectators, concerts, conventions, fundraisers, parades, fairs, festivals, and any similar event or activity that brings together (10) or more persons in a single room or space at the same time in a venue such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, private club, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space.

Order # 2: This Order shall not apply to the following:

- A. The Colorado State Legislature or the Colorado courts;
- B. Normal operations at airports, bus and train stations, health care facilities, grocery or retail stores, pharmacies, or other spaces where (10) or more persons may be in transit for essential goods and services;
- C. As authorized in Public Health Order 20-22, restaurants may continue to offer delivery and take-out food services in accord with the requirements contained in that Order; and
- D. Office environments, government buildings where essential government services are offered, or factories where more than (10) people are present but social distancing measures of maintaining at least 6 feet between individuals is standard.

Definition: The CDC defines a mass gathering as "a planned or spontaneous event with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert, festival, conference, or sporting event.

This order does not prohibit people from visiting a variety of places, including grocery stores, gas stations, drive-through restaurants, and banks, so long as the necessary precautions are maintained to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This order does not mandate sheltering in place. All critical infrastructure will remain operational, domestic travel will remain unrestricted, and government entities and businesses will continue providing essential services. For offices and workplaces that remain open, employees should practice good hygiene and, where feasible, work from home in order to achieve optimum isolation from COVID-19. The more people will reduce their public contact, the sooner COVID-19 will be contained and the sooner this executive order will expire.

It is not the Elders' intention to cancel our regular worship services at Galetton Community Church. We note in the Declaration not a prohibition of ALL gathering in groups of over 10 persons, but allowance of businesses, stores, banks, etc. to continue to operate, and the closing of churches is not mandated by this declaration but rather mass-gatherings. We note also that social gatherings, that is, regarding non-essential recreational or leisure-related events such as eating out, working out in gyms, etc. as those mentioned by the declaration as discouraged or prohibited. We do not consider attendance upon the Worship of God a matter of leisure or a mass gathering as defined by the CDC – especially given our small size – or a matter non-essential, in the sense of these other activities specifically mentioned in the declaration. Our intention is to meet at our regular times to worship the Lord according to His commands.

In keeping with our intention, **we also wish to comply with the other directives in the declaration**, concerning hygiene, distancing, etc. consistent with interests or entities that remain open, and also desire to be sensitive to those members of our congregation who consider themselves to be at risk of contagion.

If you believe yourself to be at risk, please do not consider this a demand on the part of the Elders that you attend, this communication contains nothing of the kind. If you are ill, feverish, actively coughing or sneezing, please stay home, as you may be at greater risk to yourself or others.

If you believe yourself to be at risk, please stay home. Seeing that we have had some illness in our congregation already, steps have been taken, and are ongoing, to provide some extra sanitation in our building, including but not limited to the table tops, microwaves, and other items frequently coming into contact with hands, etc. and this will continue, as a part of our cleaning, as long as necessary.

Let us call upon the Lord, that with this affliction, however mild or severe it turns out to be, that He would grant repentance and reformation.

First to the Church, especially in these particulars:

1. To understand her duty to worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth.
2. To keep one whole day in seven, the first day of the week, as a Holy Sabbath to the Lord.
3. To consider the command of the Lord to gather, to call upon His Name, to Worship Him not an optional thing, but that she would consider His Worship greater than some elective event, more important than a visit to the grocery store or to the restaurant, and attend diligently upon Him in the means of grace. (Psalm 9.1; 111.1; John 4.30-34)
4. To repent of so quickly and easily canceling worship services, instead of realizing that it is times like these when the Church ought to be meeting; praying for repentance and relief, hearing the teaching of the Word of God in order to know how to be of service to God and our fellow men, and to receive comfort from the Word of God. (Lamentations 3.39-41)

Second, for our society at large:

1. To turn unto the Lord, trusting Him in times of disaster. I noted with some sadness that our governor's order did not call upon the citizens of Colorado to pray, and call upon the Lord for deliverance.
2. To cease trusting in means, believing that means alone can work for the solution of any affliction or solving the effects of any disaster, and imbibing in such practical atheism.
3. To awaken voices of Godly wisdom and reason, speaking the truth in love, providing Biblical solutions to difficulties such as we face today.
4. To partake of a "Biblical and godly calculus" regarding how we handle such dangers as these, instead of being dismissive toward the Lord and His Word, and the sanctified and real-world solutions that are taught in it.

It is in time of trial, affliction, and deprivation that the idols of our minds come more fully into notice, and are more fully revealed as replacements to the true and living God, and lesser saviors than our Savior Jesus Christ. Let us also take this time to examine ourselves, and undertake a true rooting out of our hearts those things upon which we have rested other than our Great God. And may He guide our hearts closer to Himself through this difficulty, that we should not trust in horses or chariots, medicines or riches, or any other thing, save God Himself, and His mercy in Christ Jesus.

Elders, Galeton Community Church