

Hello Grace family,

The elder's met last night (3.23) and made the determination to follow the CDC's March 15th recommendation of postponing all large gatherings for 8 weeks. This will take us to the first week of May. Now this could be reduced or it could go longer, the elders will be reevaluating the situation on a regular basis.

We are putting all major expenditures and hiring's on hold for now, however, we also want to encourage you to continue to be faithful in your giving. You can give online www.gcfhillsboro.net/give-online

Right now, with how things are in Marion County, some people may be asking why are we taking the steps we are? And as I thought about this, it made me think about my fire service days. In the fire service, we were constantly communicating things such as:

- Don't leave candles unattended
- At a minimum, have a smoke detector on every level of your home and change the batteries every six months
- Wear your seatbelt
- Children under 13 need to ride in the back seat of the vehicle
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed
- Etc.

With this last one, some may say: "Why? Why sleep with my door close. That's stupid and I'd never do that." The reason the fire service shared this message wasn't that we wanted to tell people what to do but that we wanted to help save lives.

You see, the simple act of closing your bedroom door could mean the difference between life or death in the event of a [house fire](#). This simple step will reduce toxic smoke and limit the spread of flames by restricting oxygen and decreasing temperatures.

By limiting a fire's ability to spread, that gives you more time to react when the smoke alarm goes off by not waking up in a smoke-filled environment and these days, every second counts. Why? The average time to escape a home fire has gone from 17 minutes to just three minutes or less in recent decades due to the materials of furnishings and [open floor plans](#). In fact, a September 2018 report by the National Fire Protection Agency concluded that residents are more likely to die in a home fire today than in 1980.

This in essence is what we are doing today. WE may not see the need to do what we are doing and it may seem like an extreme but our best decision, as a church and as a community, would be to follow the guidelines of the medical professional, those on the front lines, those seeing what is happen every single day, across the nation.

The actions we are told to take are not about preventing the spread of the virus all together. The steps we are taking are to slow the spread of the virus and allow medical facilities and personal the ability to treat those who need medical assistance. It will reach Marion County at some point. Are we ready when that day comes?

So what can we be doing, now?

1. Continue with your daily reading plan, devotional and prayer time. There is no better way to be spending our time then in God's Word.
 2. We will be live stream services on Sunday's. You can access the services from Facebook or our website home page. Now, this Sunday, because of me being self-quarantined our hope is to record the praise team some time this week and for me to record my message at home and then we will share that on Sunday. But come April 5th we hope to live stream the service at 1030 from the building (maintaining less than 10 people and staying 6 ft away).
 3. Look for ways to serve others in the community. Do we want a cure for feeling depressed or down? Focus our attention on helping others. It's hard to be focused on what we are going through when our focus is on helping others. There are 59 "one another" verses in the New Testament. Give them a look and put them into practice.
Also, I have included a Good Neighbor Bingo card (an idea I got from another church). Give it a try and let us know what ways you came up with to serve others. It will be attached to the group email or on our website under Covid 19 response.
- That's it for now, I will be sharing more in the days to come. Keep your eyes on Christ because He is still Lord.