

## **GCO Elders update - January 8, 2021**

Grace Church Family,

The following is our most current guidance for our flock as we head into 2021.

### **OUR GOD-GIVEN MANDATE**

Christ is the head of His Church, and as your elders, we look to Him as we lead you. Christ reigns as supreme sovereign over all. Therefore, we do not take matters in our own hands, we choose to live wisely under the Lord Jesus Christ and obey the Word of God. While current times have stretched us all, we have seen God strengthen His people in many ways, mercifully bringing about amazing outcomes as He saves and sanctifies as He wills.

God wants us to lead with integrity and clarity, shepherding the entire flock through difficult times. 1 Peter 4:12-19 gives us all instruction, then instructs elders in chapter 5, verses 1-5, and all the flock in verses 6-11. We are to live, not in the fear of man, but with reverence for God. While there are a range of opinions regarding COVID concerns, we ask “What would glorify God?”, “What does His Word require?”, and “How can we wisely shepherd this flock?”

We must be and do what the church is called to be and do, leading and teaching you to live in unity and love. Christ’s body is not bound to a building or certain hours. Knowing there is freedom in forms or formats, we will not budge when it comes to church functions commanded in Scripture. We will not eliminate, or neglect gathering together to worship God, preaching the Word, administering the ordinances, or practicing the one-anothers. We must engage in worship, fellowship, evangelism, and discipleship as a unified body of believers.

### **GOING FORWARD**

Regarding our gatherings going forward, we are meeting on campus and throughout the community. For now, with our on-campus events, we will continue to utilize the tent (currently our largest venue) and hold large gatherings outside. We are blessed with a church campus conducive for this. Some of our smaller groups may also meet inside some of our larger rooms, as we determine to be reasonable and best. We will trust leadership to be wise and responsible.

We do not want anyone to feel pressured to violate their conscience. Everyone has different comfort levels and must follow their conscience as they follow the Lord in a mutually accountable Christian community. We will operate as a healthy Biblical church regardless of the situation. We want to be a unified body and a solid gospel witness to the community, showing utmost love for all.

As a plurality of elders, we collectively seek the wisest, most God-honoring decisions for the flock God has called us to shepherd. Our hearts are set to honor the Lord Jesus Christ above all and do what seems most reasonable and makes the most sense. We look to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, to lead us, as we glorify God above all, obey His Word, and lovingly shepherd the flock among us. Christ is the head of His Church, and we look to Him as we lead you.

**SOLI DEO GLORIA**