

Dear Redeemer Family,

I hope you are all well today and trusting the Lord as things continue to change rapidly in response to Covid-19. I'm writing to let you know that after a number of discussions, Lem and I have decided that Redeemer will join many local churches in suspending worship gatherings through the end of March. Given how much we value and practice physical presence, we were reluctant to make this difficult decision. But in response to the NC government and the DHHS recommendations, we believe this is the most loving and prudent way for us to contribute to the health, welfare and safety of our city.

We want to assure you that this decision is not from a spirit of fear but of love. Our confidence in our "one God, the Father Almighty" means that we are not afraid, but rather see this as an opportunity to love and serve our community, our city, and our country. Canceling services doesn't mean we take a break from being Christians! Rather, it allows us to focus our energy and time on loving each other and our neighbors in practical ways, being calm and unafraid, practicing hospitality, and being creative in how we serve our community.

Many around us are scared, anxious, and lonely, without the certain hope that we have in Christ. Andy Crouch wrote recently in response to the crises that "we have an unprecedented chance to act redemptively in the midst of crisis and fear. Redemptive action is characterized by creative restoration through sacrifice." Instead of moving towards panic or self-protection, we need to move towards those around us with the goal of bringing hope, help, and peace.

Here are a few actions items we want to encourage over the next few weeks:

1. **Community Groups** - As much as possible, continue to meet with your Community Groups. Meeting in smaller groups has never been more important than now! Of course, please take appropriate health precautions including staying away if you are not feeling well, taking extra precaution in food preparation, serving, and disinfecting everything!
2. **Worship** - We'll be providing several "family liturgies" that can be used for worship in your home or in your CG as you gather. As we've been discussing in our sermon series, we have a deep and constant need to be re-orienting ourselves into God's story - now more than ever. Without corporate worship, the burden falls on each family to spend time daily and weekly reminding ourselves, our families, and each other how the gospel story shapes our interpretation and response in this unique time.
3. **Hospitality** - Be aware of the needs of your neighbors, especially the elderly or others in need. Invite a neighbor for dinner, ask how you can help, and demonstrate the calm, settled peace that comes from knowing Christ in the midst of crises.

A few other notes:

**Online Service** - We won't be recording sermons or streaming a service. We are

suspending our Creed sermon series and will pick back up when we begin meeting again. Carmel will be live streaming on Facebook at 9:30am.

**Giving** - We humbly ask that you continue to faithfully support the work of Redeemer while gatherings are on hold. If you normally give by cash or check, we ask that you utilize our [online giving platform](#) through Carmel. This is a great chance to set up recurring giving through your bank's Bill Pay feature or online!

**Communication** - We plan to send quite a few more emails than normal to help us all stay connected and updated. If you have any questions, needs, or concerns, please don't hesitate to respond or reach out to Lem or me directly.

Finally and above all, we encourage you to be faithful in prayer.

- Pray for peace in our own hearts.
- Pray for the end of this pandemic.
- Pray for healing for those who are sick.
- Pray that God would give us deep love and compassion for those who are suffering.
- Pray that God gives wisdom to our leaders, medical workers and others who are serving the sick.

We have a God who seeks the brokenhearted and loves to work redemption and restoration in the darkest of days. He will save!

Will you join us over the next several weeks as we pray, serve one another, and love our neighbors for the sake of Jesus?

Your pastors,  
Lem and Josh