



Dear Church Family,

As you may already know, the GCBC Elders made the decision that we should suspend our worship services and other public ministries. We do not know how long this suspension will last. It was not a decision we made lightly, and I am very grateful for the leadership of the church in these matters. Like you, we are monitoring the situation closely. Our intent is to communicate with you efficiently and regularly. Every vehicle at our disposal is being deployed in that endeavor: Facebook, Instagram, e-mail, text, and phone calls. If you have questions – call the church office (217-784-5702)

All my life as a pastor I have tried to communicate to people, especially children, that God does not live at the church. Jesus told His fearful disciples that “I am with you”. I do not think that promise only applies to the His presence in the mission of the church. Zephaniah 3:17 "The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing." The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very PRESENT help in a time of trouble. (Ps 46:1) But, there is something very significant about the church collected. I miss Sunday gatherings. We are called, commanded to meet together. Please pray that in the midst of this time of separation we can remain as Paul said in Ephesians 4: “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to our call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

I want to share with you a few things that I do know.

1. We will be doing a livestream worship service. I have no idea how that will look. It will probably change every week. But – JOIN US! You can see it on Facebook and our Web Page. We hope to also stream Sunday School. Please pray for the service and those who watch.
2. Please avoid coming to the office unless it is absolutely necessary. Call, call, call – the church number, 217-784-5702, even if the office is closed - there are ways to communicate.
3. Let Bonnie know your email address if you want to get the latest updates. We can use snail mail. I cannot emphasize this enough: **THE CHURCH WEBSITE IS A VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.**
4. Please continue giving. I know this is creating economic stress on many of our church family. And, only the Lord knows what the future holds. Thankfully, we have the

mortgage paid off – Hallelujah! And, with the building closed there are some cost savings. But, we have a \$100,000 obligation to missionaries and there are staff members who are dependent on their paychecks for doing life, and the church has insurance bills to pay and electric bills to pay. We are seeking to be careful and faithful. Thank you for your willingness to help with keeping ministry going through your giving.

5. Many of you have asked about shut-ins and folks who may have trouble getting out. First of all, please call them and ask them AYO (Are You Okay)? Secondly, we have intentionally deployed Becky Willey to help with shut-ins. She is a retired nurse, daughter of Dorothea Burgess and sister to David Burgess. She recently trained as a Parish Nurse and she has a passion for serving others especially the fragile. Becky is calling folks and seeking to be an encouragement. Pray for her.

6. I recently said in a sermon that this is a period of opportunity for us. NONE of this takes the Lord by surprise. We are CALLED TO THIS TIME! It is an opportunity to cast ourselves on the Lord and know how He does and can care for us. It is an opportunity to know what it means to love the Lord and love others. It is an opportunity to serve starting with our own families. It is an opportunity to proclaim to the world the reason for our hope. Let us boldly step through this door of opportunity.

I love you and am praying for you.

Paul