

Hey Friends,

Greg here - just checking in on Thursday the 12th. I note the date because this Coronavirus information may be dated by the time you get this. As you have probably surmised, we are in for some life-changes in the weeks to come. We're sailing in uncharted waters, but we are not sailing alone. We have our Master guiding us. Please know my plan is to keep my eyes on the Master of the ship, Jesus Christ. He has never failed me.

Before we consider the particulars, I want to direct you to the big picture. There are going to be opportunities for God to use you in the days to come. It might be through prayer, or an encouraging phone call, but people around you will feel the need for connection and hope. You can offer that!

Whenever I find myself in what feels like unusual times, I think of that line from the book of Esther, "**for such a time as this.**" Maybe everything in our lives has been preparing us "**for such a time as this.**" To be witnesses of hope on a day of anxiety, to encourage, to give, to serve one another and our community, and to shine the light of Christ. This is the day to live out our faith, rather than our fears.

Now to the particulars: Session decided last night that the church will act in concert with any directives our Governor gives. In the last Governor's briefing the press were told that an executive order on limiting large gatherings was soon likely. If he does issue such an order we will postpone **all** gatherings until directed otherwise. In that event, worship will be continued on-line through our digital platforms – hopefully in video. We are looking into tools to enable digital video meetings – for small groups and committees. This will be an inconvenience, but just about everybody in the US and world is in the same boat. One member of Session commented that this was a painful, but really obvious decision for our church. None of us have ever done this before, so we will learn as we go.

You might wonder what you should do before a Governor's announcement. Here at the church we will continue as appropriate, but if you have anxiety about being around groups in this season, please follow your instincts. Certainly don't attend out of a sense of obligation. Our God is a God of Grace, and we are a church of grace. If you feel sick in any way, I urge you to not go to any public gatherings and consult your doctor.

Lastly, if you have a computer I strongly encourage you (if you haven't done so already) to "favorite" our website at northminsterchurch.org. Second, download the Northminster App if you have a smart phone. These will be the best places to get up-to-date information. They will also be the platforms for our worship. We already have a lot of information available on the website regarding Coronavirus and numerous helpful links. If you don't have this capability, let your deacon know. If you don't know your deacon, call the church for that information. Don't be surprised if your deacon takes the initiative and calls you. Make sure your deacon knows your preferred contact information.

Lastly, be encouraged by the words of the prophet Isaiah,

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

In hope and faith,

Greg Kennedy

