Rosewood Church friends,

The health and wellness of our congregation, guests, and communities is a top priority. Yesterday, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and Governor Whitmer issued strong advisories and recommendations to the public and community leaders. We are all encouraged to practice good hygiene, protect those with a heightened risk to illness, avoid nonessential travel, and avoid gatherings of 100 or more.

To keep people safe and slow the spread of the virus we are cancelling Sunday morning worship and Sunday School this week (March 15) and next week (March 22), and we will take future services on a week-by-week basis. Small groups, social events, GEMS, Cadets, and any other church ministries should use their best discretion about how or whether to meet, so check with your leader to confirm. Staff will be working from home when they're able and will not be holding regular hours, so the building will be closed to the general public. If you must get into the building and don't have a key, you may email a member of staff to find a time.

For some this is welcomed, common-sense news. For other's you may feel we're taking it too far, but prudence is not panic and it is important we do this for three reasons:

1. If we wait until there's a problem we will have waited too long. Carriers of COVID-19 are contagious for at least 14 days before they experience symptoms, so waiting until there are more confirmed cases puts more people at risk through group events.
2. Even though we can't stop the spread we can slow it down. A spike in cases would put a strain on hospitals and health care providers that may prevent adequate care for every person in need. Social distancing will help stagger the cases and allow proper health care to anyone who becomes infected.
3. Many in our congregation are at the greatest risk of infection. And even if you aren't, members of your family and friends are. This isn't just about keeping Rosewood safe; it's for the safety of our wider communities.

In the meantime, we are going to make the best of what we have available to us. The staff is working to produce an online church experience that will be released every Sunday we don't meet at 9:30 AM (CC available). You will be able to access it through our website, rosewoodchurch.org, and you'll receive an email link when it's published. Everyone will also receive a weekly study guide based upon the message so you can engage in personal or family discipleship. This is new terrain for us, and we will continue to think of creative ways to engage in spiritual formation.

Thank you all for your cooperation and understanding. While we may not be gathering, we are still Christ's Church, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, ambassadors of the kingdom of God, and servants with Christ. While we're apart you can pray for our world, assist your neighbors in safe ways, spend newfound time with your family if you're able, and discipline yourself in reading and reflecting on God's Word. I can't wait until we are able to come together again, and until then we will not be hindered in our love and care.

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