



May 4, 2020

Grace Family,

Greetings in the name of our Triune God. This update will be brief, but important.

Yesterday, your Congregation Council met online to discuss the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council has been meeting about every two weeks during this period of suspended in-person ministry. We reviewed recommendations from several committees of our congregation, the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, the CDC, and SC DHEC. Your pastors also shared their thoughts and our entire discussion was framed in Scripture and in prayer. The outcome of our time together was twofold:

1. Council will continue to review recommendations and information from these and other reputable sources, and will work diligently to make sure we are continuing to make decisions that are well-informed and faithful.
2. Council will meet again on its regularly scheduled date (Sunday, May 17). One of our hopeful expectations for that meeting is that we will be able to outline an approach for gradually lifting the suspension on in-person ministry at Grace.

Please understand that this process will take time and it will happen in stages. When we begin to gather for worship once again, we will not resume ministry 'as normal' right away, and the shape of what we do will certainly continue to adapt as we go. Unique times like these demand that all of us be a little flexible.

As of today, nothing has changed. Yet we want you to be aware that the day is coming when we will present opportunities to volunteer in new ways. We will need to work together to become a family that worships under one roof once more. So, for now, we ask for your patience, and in time we ask for your help. This will be different and it will be gradual. I am certain that, together, we are up to the challenge.

I ask that you join me in praying words attributed to Martin Luther:

**O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Gregg Hoffman
Senior Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church