



Dear NLC family,

I missed you on Sunday! From the emails, texts, and phone calls I've been receiving I know you missed the opportunity to gather in worship with each other as well. My heart goes out especially to those of us who live alone. You are not! You are in the hearts and prayers of many, and the Lord is with you, too. As Isaiah 41:10 encourages us: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

News and guidance regarding our national, community, and personal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to develop quickly. As I understand it, all of these efforts are intended to slow the rate of exposure and infection, "flattening the curve" of this virus, so as not to overwhelm our public health system. It is not an affront to our faith, but a unique opportunity to live by faith and uphold others through our faith in Christ. I am hearing examples of that from many.

The word "church", which comes from the Greek word, ekklesia, refers to an assembly of people called out from the world as followers of Jesus. You can understand why it is such a challenge and concern for Christians when we are being urged NOT to assemble. **Thank you for your very positive support for the decision to cancel all church activities including worship services March 15th and 22nd. It is likely we will update you with further cancellations as the response to this virus pandemic develops.**

The important thing is that you and your family are healthy, have adequate supplies, and are encouraged in your faith. If you have a need, please call the church office (591-1176), which remains open at this date. We're happy to pray with you and help find a way to meet your need. I am so glad to hear that a Life Group leader has been texting their group members daily to encourage and check about needs. I'm also aware that Life Lesson class leaders are staying in touch with class members. Almost everyone I text or call has been in touch with someone else from the church. Praise the Lord and keep it up!

In the office we are ramping up our ability to offer video messages and even worship services for viewing online. This coming Sunday Bruce Smith's message from March 8th will be aired on KRDU, AM1130. All past messages are available on our church website. **Please visit our refreshed church Facebook page at New Life Community Dinuba; a refreshed NLC Children's Ministry Facebook page is up as well.**

Finally, I want to share with you a prayer written and distributed by Mennonite World Conference, a global agency of which our church is a part:

*"Heavenly Father, we pray for people in the U.S and around the world impacted by Coronavirus. We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones, and for those who have been quarantined and are feeling alone. We pray for healing for those who are sick. We pray for safety, strength and compassion for medical workers who may be overwhelmed caring for those who are battling various illnesses, and workers who are exposed to greater risks. We pray that our public officials act with compassion and wisdom as they work to contain the virus. We pray for those without access to health care, and for those who don't know how they will make it if they get sick and can't go to work. We pray that your peace will guard our hearts and minds so that we are not overcome by anxiety and fear. Father, inspire in us ways to show your love to one another and to ourselves. Guide our hearts and our actions to greater care, kindness and generosity in the midst of these fears and uncertainties, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

*In the love of Christ,*  
Pastor Mark