



VictoryPoint

DATE: November 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Update from the VP Elders regarding Sunday Gatherings

VictoryPoint Family,

As we've all heard, seen and even personally experienced, COVID-19 cases are drastically on the rise not only in our state but in our local community. In just the last month we've seen an exponential growth in cases. It's as if the surge we were all told to expect and were preparing for in the spring has now arrived in our area. Increasingly, more and more of us now actually know people both in our church and in our lives who've either had COVID, currently have COVID, and have even died as a result of it. The sudden increase in cases is also creating significant pressure on emergency and hospital systems across the state, and as we've heard from VPer working in the public sector and medical fields, our own local hospitals are experiencing this as well.

On the one hand, we're dealing with a virus. Inevitably it will spread, despite our best efforts to gather safely, and for the foreseeable future it will continue to be part of our reality. And while we do not fear, we do seek to be wise, and to be a loving neighbor to our community. The "Gathering and Mask Order" that went into effect today in the state of Michigan is an aggressive effort to try to simply slow the virus spread and help prevent our healthcare systems from becoming overwhelmed by limiting large indoor gatherings over the next 3 weeks wherever possible.

As elders we met last night to decide what our response to the current order and state-wide effort to slow the virus spread will be. Like with all orders/guidelines, churches always have an exemption clause. Which means we are always wrestling in discernment between what we "can" do and what we "should" do. As you can imagine, none of our decisions during this pandemic have been easy ones. When making decisions of this nature we strive to consider not only the physical health of our flock, but the spiritual health as well. We also filter decisions through our vision and mission. And of course most importantly we seek to discern what God is saying to us collectively, despite our different opinions. Out of that **we've made the decision to suspend our in-person Sunday Gatherings for the next three Sundays**. Out of love for each other and demonstration of love for our neighbor/community, we feel this is the right thing to do. Simply, we feel we should attempt to be part of the solution as best we can.

We want to stress that this decision only affects the next three Sundays. It's our hope we will resume in-person gatherings on December 13, and we will meet again as elders on December 7 to reevaluate. But beginning this Sunday, November 22 (and also on November 29 and December 6) we will NOT have in-person Sunday Gatherings. Instead we will be providing online resources for your worship-at home experience. This will be similar to what we provided during the summer at-home weeks (worship video, message video), but with even more options and interactive ideas for the whole family. An email will be sent to every household on Sunday mornings with these resources.

"Church is people, not a place." We say that a lot. We believe that. We experienced that in unique ways already this past year, and now we get to test that belief again for a season. The Church never closes, because WE are the Church. We are adaptable and resilient. Over the next few weeks we simply pivot and be the church in different size expressions and locations. Whether "church" for you over the next few weeks is as an individual, as a family or a gathering with another household, our staff is here to resource you and help you BE the church wherever you are. We even look forward to hearing the stories of your experiences and discoveries over the next weeks when we gather back up again!

VictoryPoint, know we love you. We know not every decision we make is the one you might make. We do our best to lead out of love, responsibility and obedience. Know that we are always available to listen to you. You can email us as elders [here](#) or get a hold of us individually if you have questions or concerns. Most of all, thank you for your trust and support, and please continue to pray for us, as we pray for you.

The VP Elders

Matt Crozier, Scott DeJonge, Lori DeVisser, Tom Joustra, Wendi Kapenga, Travis Vruggink, Matt Yount

“Don’t be afraid, I’ve redeemed you. I’ve called your name. You’re mine. When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. When you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior.

– Isaiah 43:2-3 MSG