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*Dear Grace Church Family,*

*As elders and church staff, we want to care for our congregation in all respects, including the physical well-being of our community. We are carefully assessing how to do this in the context of the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.*

*We believe the most helpful way to think about a situation like this is to ask the question, "What does it look like for us to love our neighbors well?" We want both our corporate and individual decisions to be made not from self-interest, but to be made from a desire to love, serve, and protect the most vulnerable among us. Since a significant percentage of the elderly and chronically ill patients who get the virus need hospitalization, part of the way we can love our vulnerable neighbors is by helping to slow down the spread of the virus, thus taking pressure off our healthcare system.*

*We have provided important, detailed information below about the current situation and steps we need to take, and will be posting updates on our webpage here.*

*If you or a family member has a fever, cough, runny nose or sneezing; please stay home. You can find the sermon and related resources on the Grace Church app or at [1Samuel.gracechurchsc.org](https://1Samuel.gracechurchsc.org).*

*The uncertainty of this outbreak can create anxiety in our workplaces, schools, and day-to-day activities. Yet we remain certain of God's steadfast presence and careful attention to all that is happening. Please join us in praying for those who are affected by this illness, as well as their caregivers and those who are working around the clock to minimize the impact of this virus.*

*In Psalm 46, we are reminded that it is God who is our refuge and strength, and our ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, let us not fear, but with confidence use this opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus through our prayers and our care for others.*

In Christ,  
Governing Elders & Leadership Team

## General Information & Precautions

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Like we would during any other potential emergency situation, we are listening to what local and national authorities advise as we determine any necessary response as a church. As of this email, no guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or state or local agencies impact our normal operations or ministries.

As a precaution, for the foreseeable future, we have asked our volunteers and greeters to refrain from shaking hands, and we will ask our members to avoid shaking hands as well.

Our cleaning staff is spending even more time sanitizing high touch and high traffic areas on our campuses. Our volunteers are also aware of the need to be even more vigilant in keeping their rooms clean.

We are asking staff, volunteers, and members to stay home if you have a fever or are feeling ill, or if you have recently spent time with someone who is.

### STUDENT MINISTRY

Our retreat facility, Carolina Point, has suspended all operations through the end of the month of March. Therefore, all student ministry retreats have been postponed.

### OUTREACH

Our Outreach team is monitoring the global spread of the virus to see if the situation impacts any of our scheduled mission trips (we have postponed our March / April trips to Kenya and Nicaragua). We will monitor guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of State, and may cancel trips at our discretion. Our Senior Honor work is also being suspended on a case-by-case basis depending on the rules governing various facilities.

### SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

If the virus impacts significant numbers of people in our area, we will also have opportunities to serve and minister to those who are affected. We are formulating plans to be ready to respond as soon as is practical, including serving those caring for the sick as well as serving those who would be asked to avoid shopping and crowded spaces.

### PREVENTING / SLOWING DOWN SPREAD

According to the CDC, washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is one of the best precautions you can take to prevent the spread of the virus. When handwashing is not possible, alcohol-based hand

sanitizers are a recommended alternative.

These “common sense” guidelines from the CDC can help keep you and others healthy:

- If you are sick, don't go to work, school, or church. If you can work from home, do so. If you have been with someone who is now sick, isolate yourself as much as possible.
- Eat healthily and drink lots of fluids.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid optional crowded events and unnecessary travel.