



May 21, 2020

Dear Bethany Family,

I am so excited to see you all Sunday as part of our Memorial Day Car Parade & Canned Food Drive. Though we cannot shake hands or give hugs, it will be so good to see your faces, look in your eyes, and share a masked smile. The thought both warms and breaks my heart as I look forward to the joy, while grieving that it must be under these conditions.

It has been 10 weeks since the “Safer at Home” order was enacted. It feels like yesterday and, somehow, also like forever ago. I want to update you on where we are in relation to the current state, county and city requirements related to COVID-19.

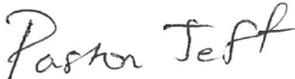
While some of the state closures are being lifted, large gatherings are still restricted according to the State order. **As such, Bethany Church will continue live streaming our services until we have received instructions allowing us to gather together safely.** I am praying that God would guide our city and state leaders as they make decisions that affect so many people.

You may have heard that there is currently a movement of churches planning to reopen on May 31, 2020 in defiance of the Governor’s orders. I can empathize with some of their concerns. These are our brothers and sisters in Christ and, while I may not agree with the decision they are making, I do not stand in condemnation of them. However, I am concerned for both the health of their members and their witness as followers of Jesus. I am praying that God would give wisdom to their leaders and protect their congregations.

We have met as Elders and are in consensus that our faith is not being persecuted at this time. We have received these orders as part of a public health crisis and for the sake of our body, our neighbors, our witness and our obedience to Scripture, we will bring ourselves in subjection to the governing authorities, recognizing that all of those in authority have been placed there by God Himself.

I want to gather together as a body as much as anyone. I miss you all so much. But as a shepherd, I also want to ensure that we do so safely and that we are protecting you and your families to the best of our ability. I realize that this is difficult for everyone, in so many ways. But I see God moving in our body, growing us and guiding us. I love that the building at 2250 Clark Ave. cannot contain us. *We are the church* in our communities and with our families. Let’s use this as an opportunity to reflect the love of Christ and the light of our Hope to all who are watching.

I pray the Lord’s blessing over you and am available for any questions you may have.

Grace, 

Jeff Levine, Lead Pastor

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We desire to glorify God and see people transformed into passionate disciples of Jesus.