

March 16, 2020

Grace and Peace to the Alaska Ministry Network Family!

Over the course of the past few days, our nation has been radically impacted by COVID-19. With President Trump declaring a national state of emergency and Alaska's Governor Mike Dunleavy imposing guidelines to "flattening the COVID-19 curve," it has become advisable to make adjustments across the Alaska Ministry Network.

With that in mind, today, I am encouraging all of our AKMN ministers and churches to follow the CDC guidelines found at <https://www.cdc.gov/>; the Alaska Department of Health guidelines at <http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>; and your local authority.

1. The CDC, Alaska Department of Health, and local authorities state-wide are stating that the best way to stop the spread of the virus is to avoid large gatherings. Today, President Trump and the coronavirus task force issued new, stricter guidelines which call on all Americans to "avoid gatherings of more than 10 people; avoid eating and drinking in restaurants and public food courts; and encouraging schooling from home" until March 30. The CDC is recommending avoidance of gatherings of more than 50 people until May 11.

Since gatherings are to be avoided, we are encouraging our churches to move to an online format, explore small group ministry options, and after March 30 explore multiple gatherings of less than 50 people. This is a wonderful time to be creative in your ministry deployment.

2. All Developing Assembly churches are expected to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people until March 30. Furthermore, after March 30, all developing assembly churches are expected to avoid gatherings of more than 50 people until May 11.

While most of our developing assemblies may not have capabilities of online format, you do have opportunity to explore small group options and multiple services of less than 50 people after March 30. If you need assistance with moving your services to an online format, please contact Terry Hull at thull@voicetothevillage.net.

3. Alaska Ministry Network Conference. The AKMN Presbytery has exercised its "implied authority" cancelling the 2020 AKMN Conference and referring all resolutions to the 2021 AKMN Conference. As of this writing, the presbytery is seeking legal counsel concerning electronic balloting for the office of superintendent and for the central and northern region presbyters.

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4. Ordination. All credentialeds will be recognized at the 2021 AKMN Conference. Per the approval of the General Council Executive Presbytery, ordination candidates will be considered to be ordained as of the original date of the AKMN Conference and the laying on of hands will occur at a later date.

5. Little Beaver Camp. Little Beaver Camp will be closed until May 11 at which time we will determine if the closure needs to be extended.

6. Alaska School of Ministry. April and May classes will convene using the Zoom communication platform. We will be contacting registered students with Zoom information at a later date.

7. Ministry Department Events. We are not prepared to make decisions on any summer camps at this time. However, we are requesting that ministry department directors contact the AKMN office before scheduling any events.

8. Superintendent's Zoom Meeting Wednesday, March 18 for all pastors. We will have a zoom meeting on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 10am. The Zoom Meeting ID number is 626 376 8000. Download the Zoom app. Join the Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/6263768000>. The purpose of the meeting is for an exchange of ideas, mutual encouragement, and prayer.

Even though these days are filled with uncertainty, we can be sure that our Hope remains steadfast and secure. Jesus said He would build His church and the gates of Hell (or a virus, pandemic, economic collapse, or other disaster) will not prevail against it. These can be some of the greatest days of the church. So, remain in faith not fear, seize the moment, leverage every opportunity, and love your neighbor.

Maranatha!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Welch". The signature is written in black ink and is followed by a horizontal line.

Bill Welch
Superintendent

BW:fn