



March 13, 2020

Dear Village family,

As I've been reflecting on the last week as well as the last 48 hours, it is amazing how much has transpired. In order to slow the spread of Covid 19, or the novel coronavirus, Governor Jay Inslee of Washington and Governor Kate Brown of Oregon have both issued executive orders restricting the size of public gatherings to no more than 250 people. These orders are designed to flatten the curve of the virus's spread to ensure that first responder and other care systems do not get overwhelmed.

These orders and what they hope to accomplish are things we need to respect and support as socially conscious citizens and neighbors. As such, they directly impact our normally scheduled ministries. Please know, we have committed to honoring our hourly workers during this four-week period. We will all go through this experience together—trusting for God's provision.

Ben Spotts, our Senior Director of Operations, who is leading our efforts with Covid 19 sent out a thorough e-mail earlier today with as much information and detail as we can provide.

Village's ministries, however, are only a portion of the impact I am sure everyone is feeling. The containment efforts during this pandemic are causing a social and economic upheaval unlike anything in recent memory.

We are dealing with mass cancellation of things we value and count on for stability in our lives.

We have friends who are losing their source of income.

We have working parents who are losing childcare necessary for their jobs.

We have family or friends who are at high-risk of the more severe effects of this virus.

We know people who are experiencing acts of racism and prejudice drawn to the surface through this crisis.

The list goes on.

Sometimes with rapid or extreme change, we can go numb—sliding into self-protective forms of coping. We can also feel weary and despairing as the sense of loss erases the feeling of momentum we may have had till this point.

The people of God have known these feelings before. In fact, I am convinced that God gave us the scriptures so we could locate and ground ourselves in the human story and take comfort that we are not alone, not forsaken, and always able to search for or cry out to God. Scripture speaks to our first-person experiences.

Listen to these words of Saint Paul, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7

Paul's words echo the Psalmist who gives us one of the most poetic and hope filled prayers of the Bible,

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! A river brings joy to the city of our God, the sacred home of the Most High. God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed. From the very break of day, God will protect it. The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble! God's voice thunders, and the earth melts! The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress." Psalm 46:1-7

As we seek to lead our church, we don't always have to have all the answers. Sometimes answers are not what people need. We also don't always have to feel happy either. Sometimes songs of lament are the ones we should be singing.

Faith, hope, and love, however, are never wrong. Whatever the circumstances, these things speak to us and call us forward. They are pillars of the church. Pastor Paul Choi's hope for this season is that our rallying cry would be to "spread love and hope." When so much else is spreading, maybe we can dream of being a small part of making kingdom values go viral.

The poet Maya Angelou once wrote, "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

I believe the Holy Spirit can reveal, grow, and strengthen us through this unique challenge. Change is often when the Holy Spirit moves most powerfully in our lives and communities.

In this season, let's keep our eyes open for what God may be doing. May faith, not fear, reign in our hearts.

In this season, let us shepherd and lead our congregation through intentional and, perhaps, new ways of reaching out and encouraging others.

In this season, let us not stop dreaming that God can do abundantly more than we ask or imagine through his power at work in us through Christ Jesus.

In this Lenten season, may we be tied to the scriptures and anchored in Christ.

I'm proud to be serving alongside you.

Sincerely,  
Ken