



Dear Rocky River Church Family,

As you know, I do not like canceling church services for any reason. For example, when it snows in our area, I'm usually the last to say, "Well, maybe it's best if we do cancel." And the reason canceling church services is such an agonizing thing is because there are greater implications and consequences than most people probably realize.

That said, due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) virus and the recommendation of the NC governor, our leadership team at Rocky River Church has decided to cancel this weekend's services. In fact, we are canceling all church activities until Friday, March 20, 2020. For now, our Preschool will continue to run on the same track as the Cabarrus County School System.

This is NOT a decision made out of fear and timidity. In fact, it has taken an enormous amount of faith to take this action. Let me share a few of the reasons that helped in forming this decision.

- We care about the health and safety of our church family.
- We believe that "loving your neighbor as yourself" means keeping their health and safety in mind. We believe that being a good neighbor means taking this temporary step to help our neighbors stop the spread of this virus.
- It's also Biblical. The Bible says in Romans 13 that we are to obey the governing authorities because they were placed in position by God. Now, if the governing leaders were asking us to stop talking about Jesus, then obviously we have to practice civil disobedience. But that is NOT the case. They are simply asking us to temporarily cancel events in the hope of slowing down the virus while medical supplies and hospital personnel can catch up with increasing demands. As members of the community, this seems like a reasonable request.

I want you to know where I stand going forward. Canceling services for a weekend, or so, is temporary. But canceling services indefinitely is not something I can agree to for two reasons. First, the Bible tells us in Hebrews 10:25 that "we are not to neglect meeting together." And second, the Church is the hope of the world. For thousands of years communities have turned to the people of God for help and hope in times of crisis. In the name of Jesus Christ, we will be here to help. And just to be clear, we believe canceling services this weekend may help by "tamping down" the Coronavirus.

Be sure to check out our website (www.RockyRiverChurch.com) and on social media for a special video message this Sunday at 10:30am.

Finally, our leaders are staying informed of this global virus, which seems to change daily if not hourly. We will keep you informed of any other possible changes going forward.

Please keep our leaders in your prayers. Remember that it is important to be informed, sensitive to others, and wise in your preparations. And above all else, remember that our hope and trust is in God, who offers this through His Son, Jesus Christ, no matter what the circumstances might be.

God bless you. And God bless America and the world.

Jimmy Britt, Lead Pastor

Rocky River Church