

## PRAY WITHOUT CEASING - WORDS FROM BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON

Greetings.

The Lord God declares, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." ([II Chronicles 7:14](#))

People of God, I call on you to lift this COVID-19 crisis in prayer. Pray that God will heal our land and all the countries of the world. It is the first thing we should do. It is the most important thing we can do. It is the thing we should do at all times, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in [I Thessalonians 5:17](#) to "pray without ceasing."

As we are praying, I am writing yet another time to discuss the recent announcement from the Centers for Disease Control regarding the gathering of groups. They are advising that groups of 50 or more people not gather and this is in effect for eight weeks (**through May 9, 2020**). (See "CDC: No events of more than 50 people for next 8 weeks.") People with health risks should consider not gathering at all. I ask that you comply with this directive. This includes worship services, Lenten activities, Easter services, social events, anniversaries, weddings, funerals, etc. Large outdoor events are also not allowed.

If you are gathering in groups of 49 or less, please observe careful social distancing (spread out and use all the pews!) and please practice sanitation procedures. Church services should continue using livestreaming platforms, or at least try to worship using video-conference platforms like Zoom or Skype, or use regular conference calls. Some churches are trying all these methods with good results.

There are many incredible, creative livestreaming services happening around the conference right now. We could be reaching more people than ever with the gospel! But be mindful of copyright restrictions when livestreaming borrowed music and words. Be sure to visit our conference website and especially our special Coronavirus Response page, where we are adding new information and links to useful articles almost daily.

This is not a time to take a vacation from church. Pastors and lay people need to be serving the Lord as always. We just need to do things in a different way. That includes financial contributions. The mission of the church is still vitally important. People should continue to give, and those who can give more should consider doing so, as many are losing their income at this time.

This is an extremely fluid situation and a serious health crisis. This directive could be changed at any time. Curfews may be imposed in the weeks to come. Keep informed and follow the requirements of your state and local governmental officials. God is still the ruler yet. We must move forward with faithful, unceasing prayer, as well as persistence, patience and grace. God bless you all!

Sincerely,

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson