

You Don't Need to Open The Church By Easter



A Photo by Debby Hudson

And you shouldn't.

President Trump on Sunday announced that the White House will keep its guidelines for social distancing in place through the end of April to try to blunt the spread of the coronavirus, a significant shift from less than a week ago, when he said he hoped the country could be "opened up" by Easter Sunday, April 12.

"Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won," Trump said in his remarks on Sunday. "That would be the greatest loss of all."

Governor Kim Reynolds' [Emergency Declaration](#) currently restricts gatherings in Iowa to less than 10 people through April 16th. That date is likely to be extended.

The Iowa Department of Public Health's assistant director, Sarah Reisetter, in Sunday's [Coronavirus press conference](#) says projections indicate the number of cases will continue to climb in April. "We're thinking we might see a peak, a first peak, in the next two to three weeks, so that's the best information that we have right now." That would put the peak of the community spread right around Easter Sunday - the *worst* possible time to gather in large groups. Here's how a [choir practice turned deadly](#) when no one even had symptoms.

Also, read that quote again. "... a *first peak* ..." which infers that there will be a 'rebound' of infections as people begin to gather in groups again after the first wave subsides.

[Love Will Empty Our Churches This Easter](#)

Blogger John Pavlovitz reminds us:

*"This Easter, in fact, the churches will be empty.
And the tomb will also be empty.*

*And the joy and freedom of Love will be unleashed the world over,
in the hearts of all those willing to make hard personal choices,
to sacrifice and even suffer if it would do something that could help just one neighbor.*

This virus has forced us into the wilderness - so far outside our comfort zone. We grieve the loss of control and our ability to congregate. We mourn the postponement of our traditions. We ache to return to fellowship. But this is also an opportunity to rebirth God's ministry in new and creative ways. [Every organization including churches can now consider themselves as a startup.](#) We've never been here before, so let's proceed with faith in the form of energy, intelligence, imagination, and of course love.

Be safe, be hopeful, and be in prayer. - Rev. Ian McMullen

P.S. Yes, you can do [communion via electronic means](#).

This Week's Webinars

Tuesday, March 31st 11:00 a.m. [Des Moines Presbytery weekly Zoom gathering](#)

Tuesday, March 31st 1:00 p.m. [NCI & Prospect Hill weekly updates](#) with Ken Green from BOP

Thursday, April 2nd 11:00 a.m. [1001 New Worshipping Communities Zoom collaborative](#)

Thursday, April 2nd 2:00 p.m. [Sheltering in Place - Synod of Lakes and Prairies](#)



The Ministry Collaborative (Macedonian Ministry)

[The Ministry Collaborative](#) hosts a weekly webinar with nationally known leaders who offer their wisdom regarding the current issues facing the church.

Wednesday, April 1 1:00 p.m. – [Proclamation and Witness in this Moment](#)

Tom Long and Donyelle McCray No registration required.

Here is a link to access last week's conversation [Keeping Up With Jesus, Not the Joneses](#) and the [resources](#) mentioned during that webinar.

- **April 8 (Holy Week)** – Willie Jennings and Denise Thorpe: *Joy as Resistance to Despair*



Wednesday, April 1 12:00 p.m. – [One Great Hour of Sharing During Covid-19 Crisis](#)

This webinar will address how congregations can continue participating in One Great Hour of Sharing.



Practical Resources for Churches

April 2, 2020 12:00 p.m. [Caring for Neighbors - From a Distance](#)

This webinar offers suggestions for how churches can care for people in the community when we literally can't be close to them. Many of these ideas for reaching out beyond the congregation may help the church care for its own members more effectively as well.



Mondays/Thursdays 10 AM [The Presbyterian Foundation](#) in conjunction with other ministries will offer twice weekly webinars that will help equip ministers and the congregations they lead and serve to respond to this crisis. Join via Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/9797655080>

Recorded Webinars

Click the title to register

[Called to Teach: Basics for Sunday School during covid-19](#) Leader: Debbie Kolacki

[Easter and Holy Week in a Time of Social Distancing](#) Leader Marcia McFee

[Church Websites 101](#) Leader: Eric Seiberling

[Tips for Bringing Worship Alive and Keeping It Real in Live Stream](#) Leader: Marcia McFee

[Getting Started with Church Online: online worship, Bible studies, and meetings.](#) PRC Staff

Worship Design Studio

[This link](#) will take you to a page where you can sign up to get not only the Easter Season series, and Holy Week materials all for no charge from Marcia McFee of the [Worship Design Studio](#)