

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends of the Apostolic Christian Churches (Nazarean) of North America,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The last two months have brought unprecedented changes to our families and loved ones due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. The daily lives of almost everyone in North America have been affected as the total numbers of infections continue to rise, businesses are ordered to be closed, social distancing is required and the economy suffers. In addition, the extraordinary measures taken by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States have brought sweeping changes to society.

On behalf of the elder brothers, we are writing to our beloved fellowship in view of the “present distress” that is causing so much disruption and anxiety. It is our sincere prayer that as we communicate to you the love and concern we have for you, this letter will both encourage and exhort our beloved congregations.

The recent events remind us of the words of our Lord Jesus in Luke 21:9, “and when ye shall hear of...commotions, be not terrified, for these things must first come to pass but the end is not by and by.” Truly the “commotion” caused by this pandemic has been unsettling. Even so, the words of our Lord “be not terrified” apply directly to this time and situation. The reason we need not fear is that our Savior specifically promised that He will always be with us, even until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Indeed, let us be encouraged to remember that He is a very present help in time of trouble (Psalm 46:1).

One of the major impacts we have all experienced is the need to temporarily cancel our worship services and close our Church buildings as most are under orders to avoid gatherings of more than ten people. This seems to run contrary to the express teaching of “assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25). At the same time, we understand that we are not being restricted from worshipping the Lord for reasons of spiritual persecution, but to help slow the spread of the viral infections. In this, we should remember the Apostles also instructed us to “submit...to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake... whether it be to the King...or unto governors...” (1 Peter 2:13-14). It is important that we fulfill this Scripture and set an example to others.

The temporary suspension of our worship services is most unusual and challenging. It has caused the postponement of many special events (baptisms, weddings, choir programs, etc.), which must be very disappointing. In spite of this difficulty, many of our congregations have already organized ways to continue the preaching of the Holy Bible through livestream or audio conference calls. We commend the creativity and many efforts being made by our beloved brethren to work through these current restrictions.

In face of this situation, we would like to offer the following counsel based on God's word:

- Each congregation should make a special effort to remain connected with one another and to ensure that the needs of one another are being met (Galatians 6:10).
- This is a time for all of us to pray earnestly for one another and those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-3, 2 Timothy 1:3).
- It is important that we reach out beyond our normal circle of acquaintances and communicate especially with those who may be alone or somewhat isolated. This we do for mutual comfort and strength (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

- Though we cannot gather together at the present time, we should make efforts to worship together whether by phone or online through audio/video recordings (Hebrews 10:25).
- The first effort should be to do so with our respective congregations, in the manner that would work best for the particular situation (Hebrews 3:13).
- If some congregations are unable to arrange this, we do have other congregations where the elders and ministers are preaching in empty church buildings and yet are reaching many as their sermons are shared online on their websites (see listing below).
- We should be particularly thoughtful of our elderly who are lonely and dependent on visitors. These can be called by phone or encouraged by a letter or card (Romans 12:10).
- Special consideration should also be given to meeting the needs of the many children and youth, who may be anxious and fearful (Matthew 18:10).
- Lastly, but far from least, we should pray for opportunities to witness to our neighbors and those we meet concerning our faith in the Lord Jesus and how this present circumstance is also a fulfillment of Scriptures (Matthew 24:6-8, Mark 13:7-8, Luke 21:9-13).

Finally, we beseech you to “suffer this word of exhortation” (Hebrews 13:22). We are praying that the threat of this virus and the restrictions will soon pass, however only our Heavenly Father knows how long this will yet continue.

While the trial of our faith continues, may the Lord find us redeeming the time with our immediate families, reaching out to those in special need of comfort and fellowship, and being a light and witness to the world around us. Beloved, with patience let us possess our souls (Luke 21:19)

On behalf of the Elder Council,

ACCN Elder Planning Committee
ACCN Communications Committee

This is a list of our congregations, that we are aware of, who are streaming their preaching services online:

Brunswick Hills	http://accbrunswickhills.org/sermons/
Kitchener (Strasburg)	https://www.acckitchener.org/index.php/media-audio-video/video
La Puente	http://acclapuente.org/live
Mansfield	http://www.accmansfield.org/2020-sermons.html
San Diego	https://www.accsandiego.org/live-stream
Windsor	http://accwindsor.org/