

## Stay Home. Stay Safe.



### In the midst of the new Executive Order to stay home, we can still be people of God

Dear Friends in Christ:

These continue to be challenging and rapidly changing times. Today, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued an Executive Order to slow the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19. This order will require all United Methodist Churches to suspend in-person church gatherings and close church buildings.

**[Executive Order No. 2020-21](#), requires all Michigan residents and most businesses to stay in their homes, except for essential life-sustaining purposes. The order takes effect at 12:01AM Tuesday, March 24 and it**

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**remains in effect until at least April 13, 2020.**

While this order requires us to close our sanctuaries, we are still called to be the church every day of this crisis.

### **Impact on local churches and ministries**

The Executive Order requires all United Methodists to shelter in their homes, except to engage in essential functions to preserve human life. These include:

- Suspending all in-person gatherings.
  - worship services that meet in-person
  - group participation of worship leaders in the same space, even to record a service
  - choirs, praise bands, musicians meeting in the same space to record music
  - "Drive-in" worship.
  - Liturgists or other worship participants functioning in the same space.
  - Church office staff located in the church building
  - In person Bible studies, meetings, or gatherings
  - Non-life sustaining missions or ministries

### **Life sustaining UMC ministries and missions may continue**

Under provision 9D in the order: Workers and volunteers for businesses or operations (including both religious and secular nonprofit organizations) that provide food, shelter, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, individuals who need assistance as a result of this emergency, and people with disabilities. This allows the

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continued operation of food banks and meal programs that can be operated with the safety and distancing for both volunteers and those receiving meals.

### **How we can continue to be the church**

- Access the many resources on the [Michigan Conference Website](#) to support ministry during this time and move to implement these new tools.
- Pre-tape or conduct live worship services using ZOOM, YouTube, or Facebook Live. This allows worship leaders be in their own homes but still appearing together.
- If your church is not able to offer online services at this time, share online worship services at nearby UMCs. [See the list.](#)
- Conduct Bible studies and congregational care via telephone or ZOOM technology.
- Continue to participate in generosity and stewardship of your local church. If your church does not have online giving, contact the [office of the conference treasurer](#) to arrange for free online giving.
- Register to watch the many Webinars offered on the conference website and Facebook.

### **Where you can get immediate information**

- Watch our [Webinar tonight at 8:00 PM EDT](#) on the Governor's Executive Order
  - The [Michigan Conference Website](#) has resources updated daily
  - Michigan Conference [Facebook Page](#)
  - Follow us on Twitter - [@MichiganUMC](#)
  - Subscribe to MIconnect, our weekly newsletter
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**Friends, we have gifts to give**

As I wrote to you last Friday, the coming days will not be easy, but they can be a time when we stir up the sparks of grace which are in us. And when this crisis is past, and it will pass, we may find that those sparks of grace stirred up now might be blown into even brighter flames of love and grace by which we can touch the world. May it be so. Be well. Stay home. Stay safe.

Grace and Peace,

David A Bard



David Alan Bard  
Michigan Area Bishop

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