



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, admirably, many of you have been seeking creative ways to continue the sense of connection that is such an integral part of who we are as human beings and the faith community. One idea for a while that seemed to hold much promise to maintain that connection was the idea of “drive-in” worship services. However, as the virus has continued to spread and take the lives of more and more people, perhaps even proving to be even more contagious than earlier thought, it is the opinion of Bishop Paul Leeland and the Cabinet that this practice be discontinued by all churches—even if it may seemed to be allowed in your particular locality. As the church, we can take a step and witness to the community that our goal is to protect life rather than bring avoidable risks to the lives of others. As difficult as this is, especially as we approach Palm Sunday and Easter, do not arrange or participate in these kinds of services. We can reschedule Easter celebrations, or use other creative means of celebrating Easter. The sooner we all work together to eliminate exposure among us, the sooner this pandemic can end. We do not want to be responsible for creating an environment that risks the lives of others to exposure to the COVID-19 virus. More and more accounts are emerging of churches that have defied stay at home orders only to discover their actions directly contributed to the sickness and death of others. Please see the full statement below from Bishop Paul Leeland and the WNCC Cabinet.

With a grateful heart for all you do in service to Christ and the world,

Carl

Rev. Dr. Carl Arrington
Superintendent
Appalachian District

Update from the Bishop and Cabinet

30:19b, *"I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days"*

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

With the implementation of the state-wide "Stay at Home" order, the Cabinet has received several questions regarding "drive-in worship," where people come and worship in the church parking lot in their cars. While we honor the desire to gather for worship in whatever ways might be possible, we believe that holding a "drive-in" service is counter to what the Governor is asking of us all. It both encourages people to leave their homes and could easily violate the restriction of no more than 10-person gatherings that has been mandated. Thus, we encourage you not to offer such services at this time. We know that such a decision will be received reluctantly by some. However, our hope and prayer is that you might

embrace it as a way the Church is seeking to save lives, a sacrifice on our part for the good of the whole. We continue to undergird you all with love and care.

Blessings,

The Bishop and Cabinet of WNCC