

Friends in Ministry,

Thank you for your faithful response to the needs that have arisen due to COVID-19. We see your noble efforts to offer leadership and spiritual care in uncertain times, and we know that the burden of leadership is heavy as you seek to make the right decisions for members and staff under your care. At this point, I realize that many of us are over-worked and weary.

I wanted to offer a few words of encouragement:

1. First, **show yourself some grace**. None of us were trained for this, but God is with us and for us regardless. Take time to allow God to care for your soul before you seek to care for others. **This is a time of growth for all of us**. Perhaps the greatest growth involves the call to seek God's provision rather than trusting in our self-sufficiency.
2. In our present climate, **we may find that our usual toolbox of resources isn't sufficient**. Leaders are looking into offering Facebook Live worship and devotions, YouTube videos, online and text-to-give options, and Zoom meetings for discipleship. However, when you try something new for the first time, keep in mind that there is often a learning curve. Cut yourself some slack as you become more comfortable using new methods and platforms.
3. As you seek innovative ways to connect with your congregation, **be mindful that many are "listening in."** Our community members are at home scrolling through their social media, and they are viewing your efforts to communicate with your members. The global Church has unknowingly stepped into the one of the greatest evangelistic opportunities of our lifetime. In this time of crisis and uncertainty, share the hope that is found in Jesus so that all may hear and receive God's grace.
4. One of my favorite Gaither songs is entitled "**Little is Much When God Is In It**." That's a good reminder for all of us. If you are in a smaller to mid-size congregation, you may be caught in the comparison game as you watch larger churches roll-out impressive online gatherings. While this is a great time to experiment with online options, please don't compare your work to that of others. In some settings, personal calls, emails and letters may be just as (if not more) effective when it comes to ministering to your congregation. Offer what you have to God and to your community, and trust that in God's hands, it is more than enough.
5. Finally, **care for your leaders**. Your staff may feel uncertain and helpless to do their job. Business owners within your congregation may be struggling to meet payroll. More than ever, invest in your leaders.

If you have thoughts or questions, please email me at [blossom@nmconfum.com](mailto:blossom@nmconfum.com). I would also be my honor to pray with you.

May the peace, provision and power of our gracious God be yours,

Blossom Matthews, Assistant Director of Congregational Vitality