

Dear Friends and Members of Ray Of Hope Church,

Well this is one of those moments when I will certainly upset some, but my duty is to the Gospel first. It should not come as a surprise to any of us that worship and houses of worship are not on the government's list of "essential businesses or entities" as put out by our State Government. In our classes and Sunday sermons we often rehearse the realities of all government systems being servants of the world system and not the Kingdom of God.

The reason houses of worship are included in the list of businesses and non-profit organizations expected to comply with a no meeting standard is the public health risk thought to be increased by assembling. Our little chapel feels crowded if there are ever ten people in the room at once. Clearly I understand the Governor requests a 100 percent workforce reduction, "excluding essential services." Let me be clear, this is a time when we could invoke separation of church and State, but we will not be doing that, we will cooperate. As for our little chapel being a high risk location for the spread of this or any virus I refer you to the front page story today on AOL "Grocery workers 'vulnerable' as panicked shoppers crowd stores" (NBC News by David K. Li and Sarah Kaufman) see the link below. Let me be clear, there are hundreds of people in Walmart and all of the surrounding grocery stores as you read this. There, in those locations, is the high risk environment for the spread of this and any airborne virus, all of them.

My main issue is with the idea that the worship of God, the reception of The Blessed Sacrament, and all of the Sacraments, and public worship is not considered an essential service. If we were in the Middle Ages public worship would have been considered the first and most important service any city, town, or State could provide its citizens.

As we continue down the tracks of preparing to welcome the anti-Christ to the world stage it is certain that the worship of God will be sidelined by governmental authority. This is the fulfillment of prophecy. Those of you who did the two year study of the Book Of Revelation with us know that by the time Christ physically returns to the Earth to set up His 1,000 year Kingdom almost the entire world population will be in the daily practice of cursing God. The people who will be living at the end of the Tribulation Period will see God as an evil power making life on Earth miserable for the one world government that will be worshiping their human leader as God on Earth. Scripture indicates there will be a very small remnant of believers who will be hiding and doing all they can to survive until Christ returns. They are the "sheep" who are welcomed "into the kingdom prepared for you by God since before the foundation of the Earth." (Matt. 25:34) So, I suppose I could throw my hands into the air and say this is the way the end times church, the lukewarm church of Revelation 3:16 is supposed to go (to hell in a hand basket). I am deeply troubled by the number of churches locally who have shut their doors, turned off the lights, closed their offices and "closed" their "business."

Worship IS essential to the human person. God made us this way, we are here to give God thanks and praise. Scripture gives us this Doctrine: " ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8) And: "...Christ died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:15) We are living to worship God, PERIOD. This is the essential function of our existence yesterday, today and forever. It doesn't matter what one's opinion is about this. This is our reality. Further, we are so fortunate to be born into the Dispensation of the Church where we pray with, pray in, and pray through the Body of the living Christ among us. Our service is essential to the human community.

Therefore, we shall continue all of our services by making full use of our Skype capabilities during this time of special attention to the health of all. Be sure to find a way to join us on Skype tomorrow morning, Sunday March 21, 2020 for our regularly scheduled Sunday worship at 10:30 a.m.. Please help us out by signing into Skype as close to 10:00 a.m. as you can. After 10:25 a.m. we will not be able to add anyone into the conference so please be early or on time.

Ray Of Hope Church was founded during a health crisis caused by a virus. We know that worship IS an ESSENTIAL SERVICE, in fact it is the MOST essential service we can offer each other. As I often say, the coming together to worship God is the most important thing any of us do in any given week. It is especially important as we continue to give witness to the special charism that has been assigned to us, to stand tall in Christ on behalf of all persons of all sexual orientations and gender expressions.

Keep Sunday 10:30 a.m.; and Tuesday 6:30 p.m. sacred unto the Lord. See you at the altar in the morning, and by the way "Don't miss this for the world."

Br. Shawn Benedict, Appointed Pastor, Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
3/21/20 7:08 p.m.

For instructions on how to join us on Skype [Click Here](#).

“Grocery workers ‘vulnerable’ as panicked shoppers crowd stores” (NBC News by David K. Li and Sarah Kaufman)
<https://www.aol.com/article/news/2020/03/21/grocery-workers-vulnerable-as-panicked-shoppers-crowd-stores/23957316/>