**A Prayer for the Sixth Week of Virtual Church**

O Lord our God, just as we were refining our pattern of functioning as a virtual church, the anxiety of people has flipped the conversation from stay home, stay safe, and save lives to one of when can we reopen our church as a live, on-site community of faith.

We all miss the high touch of personal relationships. That is an important part of the unique sense of community we offer as congregations. For those of us in Christian ministry leadership we are dealing with withdrawal pains and the heightened anxiety of people around us. Some of us are also scared about the economics of our own church.

Now we know what it means to experience constant change. Emotions are increasing. The weariness of functioning in overdrive is taking its toll. The economics of our country and our world are showing signs of some permanent changes.

Many voices are speaking to us at the same time suggesting with conflicting messages when we ought to shift back to live church. Few of them have a good grasp on the specifics and how to coordinate it with national, regional, and local factors. Much less the amount of time and effort it will take to reopen. We cannot just throw the doors open again and wish for the best.

Some of the regular patterns of pastoral and congregational ministry are arising with frequency. There are births where people who want to hold the new baby are not being allowed to do so. There are deaths where a funeral and the typical passages of mourning and grieving cannot take place. There are weddings that cannot be held – at least in the manner in which the couple desires.

There are programs, ministries, and activities for the summer that may not take place. Yet when to cancel them is unknown. With schools now out until August or September there are heightened concerns about the expected educational, life skills, sports, and work preparation activities that students need to be experiencing at this time.

All of this is more than we can handle There are signs it may move into a period of chaos, or as some call it, “storming”.

At this point give us a few seconds. We need to take a breath or two.

O.K. Now we remember what it is we know so well but have forgotten in the busyness of these days. We cannot handle this, but You can. May we renew our trust in You, O Lord. May we accept again the peace only You can provide. May we look to You for the signs of the times and the direction we all need.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.