

Update on Student Ministry CCLEs and COVID-19
30 March 2020

Dear CCLE Students and Parents:

We are all listening, watching and waiting as the effects of the coronavirus pandemic unfold in our communities. The student ministry team, the executive team, a group of missions oriented medical doctors at Grace and I have been in much conversation and prayer about this summer's CCLEs to Boston, Philadelphia and the Navajo nation in Arizona. We've been in touch with our partners in each location and have been checking with our Grace Chapel finance team. Based on our conversations, research and prayer, **we are CANCELING both the training retreat scheduled for April 4 & 5, 2020 and this summer's CCLEs.**

In coming to this decision, we thought about the potential health risks to our students, staff and volunteers as well as to the communities we will visit. We considered how CCLEs foster community through traveling, living, eating and serving together in close proximity for an intense week. We pondered the implications of either inadvertently sharing Covid-19 to our Grace Chapel teammates or to our host community. We also thought of how we might inadvertently come home with the virus and possibly infect our parents, siblings and grandparents. So erring on the side safety for our students, volunteers, staff and partners, **we will be canceling all of the CCLEs scheduled for July and August.**

I know this is a big disappointment to you. So many changes in your life so abruptly. No school. LOTS of (maybe bordering at times on "too much?") family time. Not being able to look forward to your CCLE as a much-needed re-grouping time with friends and an opportunity to grow in your faith, to learn from and serve others.

We felt that by waiting to make a decision, we would not likely have any more certainty or data about this invisible virus and its progression. By making the decision now, the student ministry team can make a pivot and use their creative energy and collective wisdom to plan other discipleship and growth experiences for our CCLE students. So check in with your CCLE student ministry staff leader and stay tuned for more on this. I know they are cooking up some amazing things for you students!

What does this mean about the money you have raised?

1. We'll keep a record of the fundraising you completed for this year. If you choose to participate in a CCLE in 2021, your fundraising requirements will be credited with the amount raised for 2020. Should you choose not to participate or are unable to participate in a CCLE in 2021, these funds will be used to help under-supported participants meet their fundraising goals and/or help to defray the expense of student ministry CCLEs in general.

Unfortunately, you cannot "designate" funds you have raised to a specific friend or individual (cf #10, CCLE FAQs). For additional information, please check out our CCLE FAQs at www.grace.org/ccle for additional information.

2. Can any of your donors be issued a "refund" for their gift since the CCLE has been canceled?

Our understanding of IRS tax regulations governing charitable giving means that once funds are donated, the money is not refundable. Grace Chapel must "exercise control over the gift in order for it to be considered for tax-exemption."

Please feel free to reach out to me and/or your student ministry CCLE leader with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thankfully, our sovereign God is not surprised by these world events. He's still faithful, in control and loves all his children. Let's be in prayer together these days, bringing before God our own needs, the needs of our partners, our nation and those most vulnerable here and around the globe. May the Lord have mercy.

Prayerfully,

Jeanette

Jeanette Yep
Pastor, Global and Regional Partnerships

PS Here's an article written on March 22, 2020 from a respected periodical, *Christianity Today* about some of the larger implications of summer mission trips in light of Covid-19. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/march/canceled-mission-trips-covid-19-cru-missio-nexus-travel.html>