

Dear Grace Academy Families,

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? Ps. 27:1*

These past few weeks have been unprecedented in how they have disrupted family routines, displaced students from their classrooms, and distanced us from family and friends. Nonetheless, I want to reassure you that as we keep our eyes on the Lord, His light will bring us through to a brighter future. Though many are presently drawing away from others, my prayer is that each of us would draw nearer to the Lord – to know His love with greater certainty, His power with greater confidence, and His peace with greater assurance.

As we have been transitioning these past weeks to home-based learning, I want to express how thankful I am to the staff, students, and parents who have demonstrated such resolve and perseverance in these times. The strength of the Grace Academy community is perhaps most evident in times such as these, and your response has been remarkable. I want you to know that our staff has been praying for you daily and remain committed to providing the best Christian school experience possible amidst these circumstances.

I also want you to know how hard the teachers have been working to provide continued learning opportunities for your children at home – many of whom are balancing their time between school work and having their own children at home now as well while schools are closed. They have spent a lot of time creating weeks of lesson plans and modifying them to be “parent-friendly.” They have compiled instructional work (textbooks, workbooks, copies of worksheets, etc.) for you to pick up to ensure your children have adequate resources. Some teachers have utilized additional means of providing continued learning and socialization with their classes through online platforms such as the Seesaw App and Zoom. Additionally, your teachers have been readily available to answer questions and have sought to be in regular communication with you to provide additional support as needed.

Next **Monday, March 30**, please remember to stop by school between 9:30am-10:30am to drop off completed materials for teachers to review, pick up additional work from your teacher, and drop off April tuition payments. This will be a “drive thru” process at the front door, though you would be welcome to walk into the classroom if you would want to speak with the teacher about anything. I realize that earlier today Governor Wolf expanded his “Stay at Home” order to York County. However, his order **does allow** for travel “*to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning.*” ***Therefore, please make every effort to stop by the school. If you are unable to stop by on Monday, please let us know in advance so we can either schedule a different time for you to stop by or make other arrangements.***

We remain hopeful that this COVID-19 crisis will be a short one. However, there is still much uncertainty about how much longer the mandatory school closure might last. Therefore, we have been exploring ways to implement the most effective means for adapting the curriculum and instruction to platforms that will provide the highest level of continued learning for our students while at home. If the closure is extended further into April, classes may begin utilizing various virtual platforms such as the Seesaw App, Zoom, etc. which will enhance our current means of communication, class interaction, and direct instruction from the teachers.

We understand that any platform for home-based learning is not the same as direct classroom instruction. Nonetheless, the teachers have been dedicating much time with providing home-based lesson plans and we will soon begin making preparations for incorporating additional platforms for instruction if needed. We are committed to supporting our teachers who are diligently working to ensure that your child continues to receive continued learning during this time.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers! I will continue to keep you updated on this situation. Please continue to be in regular communication with your child’s teacher.

I want to leave you with this thought: our perspective on the COVID-19 crisis years from now might be riddled with the memories of empty grocery store shelves, school closures, and fears of financial collapse. But what memories will our children have? Let's seize this opportunity to instill in their hearts and minds fond memories of special family time together - whether playing games, building campfires, watching movies, or reading God's Word. May this season of life, however unexpected, prove to strengthen the bonds of your family – to one another and to the Lord!