

Small-Town Pastors' Conference COVID-19 Update, March 12, 2020



We are saddened to tell you about the difficult decision we have made to cancel this year's small-town pastors' conference. We've made this decision after much discussion here at the home office and following consultation with Village of Morton leaders, Grace Church leaders (our host church), and our RHMA Board of Directors.

As you can imagine, there are many factors that have gone into this decision. These include:

- Concerns of our government. Every level – local, state, and federal, including the concerns of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) – is discouraging us from having our conference. In times like these, we need to rely on our leaders.
- RHMA's reputation in Morton. What would community members think about the risks involved with us bringing people into Morton from all over the country?
- The challenge of the unknown. It's virtually impossible to put final conference plans in place when so much is changing from day to day.
- Financial and contract obligations. We are within days of having to commit significant finances to hotels, vendors, and the like.
- Area churches. Nearly 30 churches will soon be purchasing food for our meals.
- Dozens of volunteers. Many who serve us are older. We need to consider their heightened concern about exposure to germs – especially those whom we'd be asking to do extra cleaning in the kitchen and eating areas.
- Each of you. We know that you need to make plans. We know that some of you have concerns about coming. You need to hear from us now.

Factors like these and others have brought all of us on this end to complete agreement that we really have no choice but to cancel our conference. This has been a heart-wrenching decision, knowing how many have been looking forward to coming – even as we have been looking forward to welcoming them to Morton. We at the RHMA home office are praying that God will provide other means of encouragement and refreshment for them.

Please put April 12-14, 2021, on your calendar. Lord willing, we'll be having a conference!

May all of us walk wisely and maintain a deep trust in our sovereign God during these unparalleled times.

Your co-laborers,

Ron Klassen, Executive Director – for all the home office staff