

Battle Baptist Church – Contingency plan

Purpose of document

- 1 This document sets out the plans to be followed by the Church leaders (elders & deacons) in the event of a major disaster or other sizeable occurrence – ie if one or more of the following events happened:
 - loss of Church premises (paras 4 & 5);
 - loss of Claverham Community College (paras 6 to 10);
 - loss of data (paras 11 to 13);
 - loss of congregation (para 14);
 - loss of finances (paras 15 & 16);
 - loss of Pastor &/or Leaders (para 17);
 - loss of Staff (para 18);
 - severe weather & its impact on staff as well as the Church (paras 19 to 21);
 - any emergency that arises between a Friday & the following Sunday (para 22).
 - Declaration by the World Health Organisation & UK Government of a pandemic that causes widespread illness, closure of schools and the cessation of gatherings of groups of people such as Sunday Services. (para 23).
- 2 The Senior Pastor will appoint & lead a “Contingencies Team” from within the church leadership to put this plan in to effect (eg full time members of the church staff plus the Church Treasurer). Under each heading there is:
 - a list of actions that Church leaders, led by the Senior Pastor, may need to take to address the loss, minimise disruption, & continue as much of the regular Church programme as possible;
 - plus a list of pre-emptive actions that the Church leaders need to take now to be in a position to deal effectively with the above losses.
- 3 The Church Manager has a key role to play in carrying out this contingency plan. So their absence would put the successful operation of this plan at risk. Where the absence of the Church Manager is known in advance (eg booked holiday leave), the Senior Pastor will make the necessary plans to cover the absence as part of the normal line management responsibility using other staff & volunteers as appropriate. Where the absence of the Church Manager is unforeseen, the Senior Pastor should follow the relevant Loss **of staff** actions set out in para 18 below

Loss of Church premises

- 4 The Church leaders will take a combination of the following actions:
 - a. follow the **Loss of data** actions set out in paras 11 to 13 below;
 - b. seek, and consider acting upon, advice from the Baptist Union;
 - c. initially base the Church Office in the Church Manager’s home;
 - d. look into renting office space in Battle, or consider using the Manse (if available) as the Church Office;
 - e. communicate the loss & the actions below, via all possible means (e-mail from Church Manager’s home, word of mouth, local press & radio, posters);
 - f. continue with the 10.30 am congregation at Claverham & encourage everyone to attend the first service there following the loss of the Church premises;
 - g. negotiate with the Ministers of St Mary’s Church, the Catholic Church, & the Methodist Chapel to use one or more of their buildings for a Saturday evening service, &/or Sunday afternoon or evening service;
 - h. look into hiring the Memorial Hall, new Guide Hall, Battle & Langton School &/or Youth Centre for services &/or young people’s activities;
 - i. move the youth congregation into one of the available buildings referred to above, or to the Claverham Dining hall;

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- j. encourage all church members & regular attendees to be part of a house group & continue to give tithes & offerings to the Church;
- k. relocate any house groups that met in Zion Chapel;
- l. decide which of the activities in the regular weekly Church programme should continue & when & where they should take place (priority will need to be given to Caterpillar Pre-school due to the nature of its business, number of staff employed, immediate impact of loss etc);
- m. buy new equipment using current Church funds &/or money from the insurance claim;
- n. if part of the Church premises is available, decide which activities can continue by being relocated elsewhere in the buildings.

Pre-emptive action

5 **Church Manager** to:

- keep hard copies of Insurance paperwork at home;
- look into alternative building options & start discussions with relevant people (see 4g & h above);
- produce a contingency plan for Caterpillar Pre-School due to the nature of its business, number of staff employed, immediate impact of loss etc);

Loss of Claverham

6 The action to be taken depends on whether notice is given about the loss and whether the loss is temporary or likely to be permanent.

Notice given

7 The Church leaders will:

- a. meet to identify changes in locations & times of Sunday services (well before the date of the last congregation at Claverham);
- b. consult the Church in line with the Church rules before implementing any of these changes;
- c. during the above meetings & consultation, consider the options set out under “No notice given” below.

No notice given

8 In the week of the loss, the Church leaders will:

- a. communicate the loss & the actions below, via all possible means (e-mail from Church Manager’s home, word of mouth, local press & radio, posters);
- b. ask people to go to another congregation of Battle Baptist Church.

9 From the week following the loss, the Church leaders will:

- a. move the 10.30 am congregation to Zion Chapel meeting perhaps at 11.00am
- b. consider the option of hiring alternative premises such as the Memorial Hall (which includes space for the Children’s Sunday Club)

Pre-emptive action

10 **Church Manager** to look into alternative building options & start discussions with relevant people (see 9a & b above).

Loss of data

11 The Church Manager already takes the following actions to reduce the disruptive impact of this loss:

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- a. data on all computers is backed up on a portable hard drive by the Church Manager on a weekly basis;
- b. data on Church Members (Membership Co-ordinator software) is backed up twice a week (when the database is normally updated) & held by the Church Manager on a memory stick.

12 In the event of the loss of computers (stolen, faulty, damaged etc), the Church Manager will take action to repair or replace the computers using the Church Insurance policy as appropriate.

Pre-emptive action

13 **Church Manager** to:

- implement a new process/software that ensures all data on computers is automatically backed up on a portable hard drive on a weekly basis (back-up taking place during the night at the same time each week);
- take the portable hard drive home with them at night. This is also important in the event of the loss of the Church buildings, when the Church manager's home will temporarily become the Church Office (see 4c above).

Loss of congregation

- 14 In the event of the loss of a sizeable number of the congregation (eg due to disunity & division) the Church leaders will:
- a. meet to decide whether the regular Church programme can continue (Sunday services, housegroups & prayer meetings, & other weekly activities);
 - b. identify changes in the Church programme & consult the Church in line with the Church rules before implementing any of the changes;
 - c. follow the **Loss of finances** actions set out in paras 15 & 16 below.

Loss of finances

15 The Church leaders will:

- a. informed by the Church's financial position provided by the Treasurer, identify cut-backs in non-staff expenditure & the regular Church programme to ensure the staff budget for the year can be met. This may also lead to changes in staff duties & job descriptions so activity is focussed on key tasks (eg visiting church members);
- b. consult the Church in line with the Church Rules, as necessary, before implementing any the cut backs or changes identified.

16 If there is insufficient money to pay for staff wages, the Church leaders will:

- a. arrange for a special offering to cover the wages;
- b. remit the elders sub group on staffing to devise & implement a Managing Surpluses policy & practice, which will enable the Church to:
 - carefully & sensitively manage the exit of surplus staff;
 - carry out a restructuring exercise to identify key jobs & select the right people for those jobs (using the Church's Vacancy Filling procedures &/or the Baptist Union's "Facing a Pastoral Vacancy" guidance for ministerial posts);
 - as a last resort, make staff compulsorily redundant.

Loss of Pastor &/or Leaders

17 If the Church suffers a loss of the Senior Pastor &/or a number of church leaders at the same time (eg due to a road accident), the remaining Church leaders will of

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course give pastoral support to the families & take a combination of the following actions:

- a. identify & appoint new leaders consulting the Church in accordance with the Church rules (eg from housegroup leaders);
- b. consult the Baptist Union Regional Minister & consider appointing an outside moderator *before* thinking about appointing a temporary Leader who could act as Senior Pastor to chair the leadership team meetings & provide necessary direction;
- c. rely on existing staff to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Church;
- d. follow the **Loss of staff** actions set out in paras 18 below to recruit new staff, including new ministers. (This may give rise to an associate pastor vacancy if any current associate pastor was successful in filling the Senior Pastor post);
- e. meet to decide whether the regular Church programme can continue (Sunday services, housegroups & prayer meetings, & other weekly activities);
- f. identify changes in the Church programme & consult the Church in line with the Church rules before implementing any of the changes.

Loss of Staff

- 18 If the Church suffers a loss of two or more staff at the same time (eg due to a road accident), the Church leaders will of course give pastoral support to the families &:
- a. decide which of the activities in the regular weekly Church programme can continue without staff support;
 - b. review the duties of the remaining staff to cover some of the key tasks carried out by the lost staff;
 - c. secure volunteer help from church members, who have the relevant knowledge, skills & experience, to cover the key tasks carried out by the lost staff;
 - d. as quickly as possible, recruit new staff to fill the vacancies (using the Church's Vacancy Filling procedures &/or the Baptist Union's "Facing a Pastoral Vacancy" guidance for ministerial posts).

Severe weather

Impact on staff

Severe weather forecasted

- 19 If the severe weather has been forecasted:
- a. the Senior Pastor & Church Manager will make the necessary arrangements for their staff and work requirements as part of their normal line management responsibility;
 - b. depending on the expected severity of the weather, travelling difficulties & personal circumstances (where staff live, how they travel to & from work), line managers can exercise discretion & let staff leave early &/or work at home. For example, the Church Office can be temporarily based in the Church manager's home in line with **the Loss of Church Premises** and **Loss of Data** procedures above);
 - c. the Church Manager will let church members know in advance what is happening by all available communication methods.

Unexpected severe weather

- 20 If the severe weather is unexpected:
- a. all staff will make reasonable efforts to come to work at the Church premises unless the Police advise otherwise on Local Radio;

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- b. subject to the weather conditions & their health, staff will normally be expected to walk to work if they live within 2 miles of the Church premises;
- c. staff will not be expected to put themselves at unnecessary risk; they will use their own judgment taking in to account warnings issued on Local Radio;
- d. where staff are unable to get to work due to severity of the weather, travelling difficulties & personal circumstances, they will contact their line manager to let them know & agree what happens next. Line managers will have discretion to allow such staff special leave with pay for days lost to severe weather.

Impact on Church

- 21 If the Church suffers loss or is impacted in any major way by severe weather, the Church leaders will take any of the actions under the above headings in this Contingency Plan as necessary. If the severe weather is forecasted, such action should be taken before it comes, thereby limiting its impact on the Church.

Emergencies arising between Fridays & Sundays

- 22 Emergencies which impact on the Sunday services may arise between Friday evening & Sunday morning while the Church Office is closed. If such emergencies arise the Senior Pastor will, on being made aware of the situation: decide what happens about the Sunday services (whether they happen, when, where & how); & will co-ordinate action by the Church Manager and Staff Team to:
- a. take any of the actions under the above headings in this Contingency Plan as necessary;
 - b. let church members know in advance what is happening by all available communication methods. Priority will be given to Church leaders & church members who are due to organise and deliver the services;
 - c. if necessary, ensure Church leaders &/or Staff Team members are posted at expected service venues on the Sunday to re-direct people who have not received or read the communications issued;
 - d. if the emergency impacts on the regular weekly church programme, arrange a meeting of the Church leaders as soon as possible to decide how to implement this Contingency Plan to wider effect (see para 2 above).

Pandemics & other reasons for governmental closure of schools & church gatherings.

23. It is possible that in the event of a flu pandemic or other such emergency the World Health Organisation or UK Government will close schools and recommend that larger gatherings such as church services should cease. We need to be especially mindful of vulnerable elderly people and those with disabilities who may need additional support.

- a. In the event of a local outbreak the senior pastor will convene a “contingencies team” of four people (the three full time church staff plus church treasurer.) Any decisions made by this group will be circulated to all elders and deacons as soon as practicable. The elders and deacons will be fully consulted to consider what the programme of the church should be during any prolonged period of disruption.
(In the event of illness among those people the “contingencies team” will be supplemented from among the elected elders and deacons of the church so that it is never smaller than four persons.)

- b. In the event of local schools closing we will be faced with two challenges:

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- (1) Suspension of Caterpillar pre-school. The pre school have a contingency plan to deal with such a matter, and the Church Manager (as Chair of the Management committee) will report any actions taken to the “contingencies team”.
- (2) Relocation of the Sunday Service from Claverham if required.

b. Housegroups. It will be up to individual home groups to decide how and whether they will meet.

c. The Church Manager will let church members what is happening by all available communication methods Any changes to the normal programme will be advertised on the website- by e mail and by posters on the church door.