



Tuesday, 17 March 2020

Dear fellow worshippers,

Coronavirus (COVID-19): an update on the scaling back of events at BBC

Yesterday, the Government issued advice regarding social distancing measures which we should all follow in order to reduce the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Government recommends that the following groups follow social distancing measures 'stringently':

- Those aged 70 and older;
- Those with serious underlying health conditions;
- Pregnant women.

Full details of what is meant by 'underlying health conditions' can be found [here](#).

The staff team and the contingencies team have met to discuss the latest advice and in response we are suspending the following regular activities at BBC:

- Caterpillar Parents and Toddlers
- Tuesday Fellowship
- Alpha courses
- Wednesday Club (Art and Crafts; Games Emporium)
- Friday early morning prayers
- Coffee Club
- Lunch Club
- After School Club
- 4:12 Friday

Separately, the FA has suspended all grass roots football, including training, so BBFC's activities are also disrupted.

Tomorrow's Lent Lunch, which is being hosted at the Emmanuel Centre is going ahead. However, we will not go ahead with the lunch here on 25th March, and the Roman Catholic Church has already cancelled the lunch scheduled for 1st April.

Matt Hancock, the Health Secretary, yesterday confirmed in the House of Commons that

Battle Baptist Church, Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG
email: office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
telephone: 01424 774825 or 01424 775875

Registered Charity number: 1134288





faith groups are included within the advice to avoid meeting together, and so we anticipate that our Sunday gatherings will not take place. Today, the Baptist Union has recommended that 'Sunday services should not now take place.' However, we are working on plans to offer material that we can share for worship, teaching and prayer, some of which may involve online streaming. We will be in touch with you about this later this week.

Support for our fellowship

We encourage all in our fellowship to consider how we might look after each other at this time of considerable uncertainty and disruption to our normal routines. Please be praying for our fellowship: a number of members are now self-isolating. If you might be able to offer support to those who are staying at home by, for example, doing some shopping or picking up a prescription, please get in touch with the office.

If you are a member of a LIFEgroup, your LIFEgroup leaders should be your first point of contact for support. Ed, Rita and Carol are making plans for organising pastoral support for all those who are not in LIFEgroups, and we will be able to give you more detail about this later in the week.

The office remains open at the moment, although in time we may reduce the number of hours that we are physically in the building. The Government is encouraging home working wherever possible – we will tell you if we begin to work remotely.

Remaining connected to the wider community

Wherever you live, we encourage you to make sure that you have connected with your wider community in whatever way is possible: this may represent your new 'front line' in the coming weeks. Pray into what God might be saying to you about your interaction with family, friends, neighbours and others at this time. Remember that we are God's 'hands and feet' in this place, right now. I think of the story of Esther: who knows if perhaps we have been placed where we are 'for just such a time as this' (Esther 4:14b).

I will be in touch again very soon!

Yours in Christ,

Jo Reeves
Church Administrator

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