



Clare Baptist Church

**"To follow and worship Jesus
and make Him known"**

Dear church family member

Following government guidance and advice from the Baptist Union, the Deacons have taken the difficult but necessary decision of cancelling all church services and church-related activities here at Clare Baptist Church for the time being. While we do not know how the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic will ultimately affect our local community, we are aware that we need to play our part in being good neighbours to those around us. This means that there will be no Sunday morning or evening services, including Sunday Club and Lighthouse/Twilight House Gang, until we get clearance. The following groups and activities are also cancelled until further notice:

- Café Church
- Allsorts Toddler Group
- Friday Club
- Ladies' Fellowship
- House Groups
- TGWNN
- Open the Book (cancelled by request of the Bible Society)

Events a little further ahead, such as the Ladies' Breakfast in May and church barbecue in June may be cancelled, but as yet there is no need to decide.

The church AGM, scheduled for next Tuesday (24th) will also be postponed to a later date – this is acceptable by the Charities Commission due to the unprecedented nature of what we're having to do. Likewise, the Mothering Sunday Service on Sunday morning is cancelled, when we were going to thank God for all that he has done in and through the church community during 2019 as we released the Church Annual Report. We are looking at ways of distributing this report as the paper copies in church cannot be collected at this time.

However, there is also the opportunity to "do church" differently at this time:

Instead of Sunday services, there will be a "Thought for the week" sent via email or posted, including relevant notices and information.

On Wednesdays, there will be an additional “Pause for thought” sent out in the same manner, with questions to ponder and a chance to respond if appropriate.

House groups are being encouraged to stay in contact using messaging services or phone chains.

The Prayer Chain will still be active, so please use it to ensure that people are standing with you in prayer for whatever is confronting you. Either phone me on (01787) 277864 or email pray@clarebaptistchurch.org.uk to get the request going.

Pastoral support will look a bit different as we won't be meeting up, but this is also a chance to all get involved in caring for one another. There is a new updated Directory being finalised, which will be distributed in the coming days. All are encouraged to be in contact with the next person below them in the list, meaning that everyone in the Directory will be both receiving and making contact. Whether this is a phone call, text message or email is up to you to decide between yourselves, as is the frequency of contact. It may be that one phone call a week is enough; it will show that someone is interested in the answer to the great question “How are you?” You might find that the person you are in contact with is initially a stranger to you, but hopefully this won't be too daunting. If, however, you are too uncomfortable doing this, please let me know – this isn't a test of your pastoral skills or a judgement on you as a person. More information about this will be following soon...

As we go into this uncertain future we remain committed on Jesus' commandments to love God with everything we are and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Though we cannot express our love for God together, we can show this love by focussing on our neighbours – not just those we know of as our church family, but also those in the communities that we live in. I would encourage you, if you are able, to get involved in the local support groups that are springing up in the area – whether this is to offer support or receive it. While we are unable to meet face-to-face, we rely on God to “fill in the gap” between us by his Holy Spirit. It is unlikely that we will be gathering together over the Easter period, but we remember the hope we have in Jesus – in the face of adversity, God's love conquers.

If anyone has any questions or just wants a chat, please contact me or one of the Deacons.

Be blessed, be a blessing,

Paul.