

Wednesday 18th March, 2020

Dear Friends,

It is with great regret that we have to announce that the church building is temporarily closed for all purposes, and all physical gatherings of St Helens Baptist Church are for the time being cancelled. This is in line with government guidelines and on advice from the Baptist Union of Great Britain due to social distancing measures.

Although our physical gatherings are cancelled, we are keen to express that as a church we are not closing. We believe that amongst the confusion, worry and pain there is an opportunity for the church to fulfil the biblical mandate of being church together.

In the coming days we will be sharing further how we plan to support and encourage this new way of ministry. But in essence we will do this through a variety of technology including online video services, conference call meetings with the likes of, 'Zoom', and the creation of a town wide resources website to aid personal study, worship, prayer and reflection.

However, we also notices that a good number of our church family either don't have access to this technology, or simply find it too confusing! Therefore we will find additional ways to share these resources with you directly as well as ongoing pastoral phone calls.

As a Diaconate we have been working on a way to resource everyone to help care for, and encourage one other. Soon you will receive either a text, email or phone call from someone in the church to see how you are, hopefully answer any questions, and to confirm your preferred way of contact. This is important as we want to ensure that even in isolation, we aren't alone. If you're unsure if we have one of these forms of contact for you, then you can contact me via the details at the top of this letter.

Part of our support is to ensure that any in our church family who are in need, are getting the support necessary. So until you've had that phone call from someone else in church, if you need help with shopping, collecting medication, or even walking your dog, please also be in contact.

Finally, you might be wanting to offer your help at this time. You can do that by contacting me directly, or you also might want to engage with the 'street champion' campaign which we are connecting in with. Locally you can do this by registering with St Helens VCA, volunteering.haltonsthelensvca.org.uk.

We will continue to share any key developments with you, and will continue to place updates on the church website and FaceBook page.

God Bless You,

Rev Tim Haines