

ULVERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH

UBC FAMILY UPDATE MAY 27TH 2020

Hello UBC family,

We trust you and your families and friends are well during this challenging time. The reason to update you this week is to help you, and all of us, to start thinking about what the new way and shape of church will look like. While we may not be able to give you a definitive or qualitative answer we have discussed some of the implications for us as a church, but first let's read from Matthew. In Matthew chapter thirteen, what I call "the parables chapter", we read about the kingdom of God growing, changing and adapting. Jesus shared this parable and I believe this is speaking into our current situation. *The Storehouse of Truth* ⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" "Yes," they told Him. ⁵² "Therefore," He said to them, "every student of Scripture instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who brings out of his storeroom what is new and what is old." ⁵³ When Jesus had finished these parables, He left there. (Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB))

As I reflect on these words it is clear to me that church is going to look and feel very different. There will be some old and some new entwined together. We realise that we all would like to see it back to the way it was, but this simply is not going to be the reality or be practical. We have COVID-19 with us; it is here to stay. In this season of life, and particular church life, this is our new normal. However, it also means we can learn from this time and reset and allow this to be an opportunity for God to do something new and fresh in our hearts and lives and in our church. While we have somewhat lost the church experience with regards to missing our fellowship, our songs, our routines and our message together. The church is much more than just physical attendance. There is a larger purpose, which is to make disciples, to see lives transformed and to reach out to our community.

Furthermore, some of the ministries and outreach connections we previously enjoyed will either be somewhat restricted or altogether unable to be provided. No decision has been made as to exactly what this will look like and whom it will impact, but I ask you to pray with us. Join your hearts and faith together as we are in this together. Any decision to reduce or circumvent our ministries will be made with a heavy heart. However, our first priority is for you and your families' safety.

This has always been our message to you: connect with others. Make that call, ring your friends, and Zoom in. Whatever you can do to feel some normality at this time.

The question is what can we take away from this experience of change? What can we envisage as the new normal? What will our role be in helping to shape a culture and heart after God that unites who we are together in purpose and mission? However, I realise that no one really knows what this will look like. We need to hold on lightly, as at this stage any restrictions could once again be enforced by the health authorities and government. We pray this is not the outcome.

What can we bring out of this experience, out of our storehouse of this season? What good, what will be different, what heart...you name it! I appreciate this has been a difficult time for many, in fact for all of us. I thank you for your patience and trust in the leadership as we navigate through uncharted waters. Our expectations of what was before, has to change - for all of us.

As we work to structure things out and plan our re-start up as a church, we are putting together a COVID-19 Safety Plan. Here is a summary of how some of the changes to the UBC family will include:

- ◆ A new process of attention towards entering and exiting the UBC building, including temperature checking before entry.
- ◆ Induction and training for all those who serve on Sundays or mid-week if available.
- ◆ A possible registry sign in/sign out book for every person who attends UBC.
- ◆ A focus on the health and safety of our servers, volunteers and leaders.
- ◆ Each person who enters the building for weekly ministries and Sunday services will have their temperature taken via an Infrared Touchless Forehead Thermometer. Anyone who presents with an elevated temperature will be advised they need to leave and return home immediately and either contact their GP or ring the COVID-19 Hotline Number 1800 020 080 which is available 24hrs a day, 7 days a week, as soon as possible.
- ◆ Social-distancing means spacing of seats which will result in fewer numbers able to be in the UBC building (1 person per 4m²)
- ◆ Cleaning and personal hygiene are critical factors in our fellowship together.
- ◆ Safety measures such as hand sanitising stations will be available.
- ◆ Length of services will be shorter.
- ◆ There will be no food or drink offered during/after the services.
- ◆ Bottled water will be prescribed as BYO.
- ◆ Limited physical contact with surfaces and building structures.
- ◆ Observing spatial and social distancing requirements.
- ◆ There will be no hugging or hand shaking and it is important to maintain the 1.5m social distancing when interacting with others.
- ◆ Considering how small groups can assemble and what parameters are required.
- ◆ Our services will be recorded with possible live stream and links for you to view.

A more detailed plan will be circulated in the coming weeks. I understand these new requirements are very different to the way we have been accustomed to. We ask for you to support us in this process as we all move forward. Regarding member meetings, forums and MQM updates we are still considering ways to keep you notified and informed as best as possible. A somewhat different church look and restart date has not been decided at this moment however, I can speculate it maybe be around the end of July to mid-August.

Thank you for your time in reading this. Let's do the right thing, keep everyone safe, lead by example and see God's kingdom grow.

I close with this: what are you able to bring out of your storeroom in this season?

Sincerely,

Pastor Louis and the leadership team.

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