



Bessels Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN13 2PS

Tel: 01732 454921

www.bgbc.co.uk

Charity Registration No. 1132394

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Update on Coronavirus and Bessels Green Baptist Church

Dear Friends,

You will have seen the headlines from earlier in the summer, 'Places of worship in England have reopened for services for the first time since lockdown began.' Unfortunately, the headlines don't tell the whole story. Whilst we are allowed to open, there are still considerable restrictions in place: limited numbers, social distancing, compulsory masks, no congregational singing, no socialising and more. For full details of the current guidance please see the www.gov.uk or www.baptist.org.uk

Each church is different, and each church must decide on the relative merits and risks of reopening. The guidelines place so many restrictions on our worship, and the experience would be so diminished, that we have decided not to reopen Sunday worship at Bessels Green Baptist Church for the time being.

It's a good thing that the Church is not a building. We look forward to returning to church again as soon as we can do so safely. But even when we haven't been able to meet together, God has used this time and new technology to bring us together as a community.

We're all looking forward to the day the building doors are open once again, but in the meantime here's what we are doing.

- At the church members' meeting held on the 12th of August, we agreed overwhelmingly to use this time productively to refurbish our church sanctuary. We hope to have this work completed by Christmas.
- Richard, Sue and Charlie have been working hard to make our premises COVID secure from the 1st of September. We are grateful that both Sue and Helen are now back at work following their period of furlough.
- We have written to the local schools and offered them the use of our hall free of charge should they need additional space during this challenging time. The After School Club are returning to use our hall in September*.
- We have written to each of the mid-week groups that meet in the church and begun to explore how we might restart as many activities as possible*.
- Josh is working to restructure our work with young people to enable them to meet in person safely*.
- We continue to operate our online services, Wednesday prayer and virtual small groups to make the most of this challenging time.
- We are providing a weekly update summarising the sermon for those who are unable to access our online activities.
- Our Small Groups continue to meet virtually to provide mutual support, encouragement, Bible study and prayer. If you are not already part of a group, we would encourage you to contact Tim Byles or Andy and we can link you in.

- Charlie, Andy and the Trustees are now able to meet up with people for pastoral support*. Do make contact if you would like to see one of us.

*within social distancing and other guidelines.

Also, don't forget our Hardship Fund which aims to support those in financial need at this time. If you or anyone you are aware of finds themselves in financial hardship do speak to Andy Potter, Neil Hudson or Alison Riches who are administering the Fund on behalf of the Trustees.

We recognise that this has been a challenging few months for us all, so we have designed a short survey to ascertain what we have done well and review what we can do better. It will be a great help to us if you could visit www.bgbc.co.uk/survey and answer a few questions.

We are grateful to the God of hope who is constant and faithful through all uncertainty. We trust that God will guide and hold us together over the coming months. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Please pray for us, as we are praying for you and we'll see you online.

Yours faithfully,

Charlie Ingram and Andy Potter
on behalf of the trustees