

# **SOUTH COURT**

## **BAPTIST CHURCH**

November 2020

Hello everybody,

### **Here we go again...**

I've just finished listening to our Prime Minister, Chancellor and Chief Medical Officer. In all honesty, I'm not really surprised by what they have just announced - I guess most of us were expecting some sort of further national lockdown.

It doesn't feel great though does it?

As we hear or read about how this new closedown will impact businesses, organisations and individuals, let alone how this will impact our own individual worlds, it's difficult not to be concerned and deeply frustrated.

However, as we also listen to the appeals of those who continue to be on the 'front line' of all of this; our amazing nurses, doctors and others who are fighting this fight in some way - we have to do all we can to support them. I guess the best way we can do this is by actively looking after ourselves and thinking carefully about how we can look after others.

And if you think about it, that last sentence sums up a big part of what it is to be Church; not just in a global pandemic, but always. Our love for God, our faith in Jesus, needs to find everyday expression by us actively growing and loving ourselves as God loves us and also by us actively loving and serving others as God has commanded us. Along with this and regardless of our present troubles, we need to reflect on the utter life-lifting privilege that we share: we belong to God and to each other. Let's do all we can to watch over each other and also to extend our circle.

In the light of all of this then, I'm writing to highlight some aspects of what 'belonging' means to us as Southcourt Baptist Church, particularly as we navigate the next few weeks together.

### **Sundays and How to live through [more] strange days**

A couple of weeks ago, I launched into a new Sunday morning talk series: 'How to live through [more] strange days'. My hope for these talks is that the spiritual and the practical remain completely connected as we discuss ways to believe, live and get beyond survival in these uncertain times. How can we be the best that we can be for ourselves and others? What has God given to help us with this? If you missed the first talk, you can still find it on our YOUTUBE channel [ 18.10.20]

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCInKLaeLICdHQOWtmTproNw?reload=9>.

This talk series and indeed our whole Sunday morning gathering as Church will now move to our online version. Each week we will be streaming live worship, prayer, interviews, news and talks at 10.30am. Can I encourage you to make this a 'don't miss' date? Make it part of your weekly rhythm and routine as it will be an important way in which we stay connected

with each other and express our belonging. If you need practical help with how to access the livestream, please get in touch with the Church Office.

## **Children, Young People and other groups**

As with Sunday mornings, all of our other physical gatherings will have to stop for the time being. This is so frustrating as we have just got things up and running again! However, watch out for specific communications from Iain [children's groups] James [youth groups] and other leaders of groups that you may be part of in this coming week. Once again it's going to be really important to find ways of engaging with and encouraging each other whilst we can't meet physically. I know for example that Tim and Jean have already communicated with those who are part of our Something Better community. Please pray for all of our leaders as they navigate what's possible and the extra demand that this shift is going to require.

## **Bridge The Gap and our food bank**

One of the really important ways that we have been reaching out and caring for our surrounding community has been through the provision of food and other essentials via Bridge the Gap. We will continue to sustain this over the coming weeks and we will be open on Monday and Fridays. If you would like to offer your support in some way to this aspect of our work could you get in touch with Lou Clarke for a chat [lou@southcourt.org].

## **Our finances**

We don't really like talking about money do we? However, it's important that we are aware of the financial impact that these last months have had on us. We are so grateful to God for how he has and continues to release what we need, but as with so many organisations, our finances are now under pressure. Mark, our finance lead has written a separate letter to Church Members that shares in more detail, but suffice to say, we need to keep praying and also considering how we might be able to help in relation to this very practical area. If you are not presently on the Church Membership list [ why not consider becoming a Member?] you can still get a copy of Mark's letter - just ask Liz in the Church Office. The SBC giving page can be found at [https://www.southcourtbaptist.org.uk/SBC\\_DONATE.htm](https://www.southcourtbaptist.org.uk/SBC_DONATE.htm) and you can find suggestions about the different ways in which you can give to the Church.

## **And finally, Christmas!**

I don't know about you, but it is a bit difficult to think about Christmas this year with such uncertainty surrounding us. This having been said, let's be optimistic! If we are able to come out of lockdown in time, and the rules allow it - here's the basic outline of what we are aiming to do as a church over the Christmas period:

**Sunday 20th December 10.30am - All Age, family focused Christmas Celebration**

**Sunday 20th December 7.00pm - Christmas reflection and Carols**

**Thursday 24th Christmas Eve online Communion 11.45pm**

**Friday 25th December 10.00am - Christmas day Celebration**

All of these gatherings will require us to 'book a place' if we want to attend and there will be details coming from the Church Office about how we can do this over the next week or so.

That's about it for now, but please get in touch if there is anything else that we can help you with in these strange days- you are a part of us, so we want to do everything we can to help you stay connected.

Yours, as ever

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The letter 'D' is large and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left. The word "David" is written in a cursive style.