

Dear Church Family,

Important: Covid-19 Response Update (18th March)

As many of you will be aware, earlier this week the Government escalated their response to the Cov-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. The key phrase that we need to understand is that they are advising people to avoid *all but the most essential contact (this has been dubbed social distancing)*. In addition, they've encouraged people to *avoid visiting public gathering places* such as pubs, clubs and theatres. The purpose of these restrictions is to attempt to take care of those who are vulnerable or have an underlying health condition. We as a team, believe that this approach of looking out for the vulnerable amongst our community, echoes a similar biblical mandate (James 1:27). **As a result, and in line with the guidance provided by the Church of England to all their churches, we are moving all of our Sunday gatherings online, until further notice.**

This is obviously a huge adjustment that we all need to make. However, as we've prayed together as elders over these last few days, we're convinced that God is going to use this disruption to our status quo to grow within us many new expressions of kingdom culture (e.g. love and kindness) and to propel us into new forms of gospel advance. As a result, I would want to encourage all of us that this is not a moment to 'circle the wagons' or 'hunker down' until this has all passed. No, this is a moment for us as a church to shine brightly with a gospel witness. Shall we do that together? If so, we're going to have to learn some new ways of meeting together. Please keep reading to find out how:



Sunday Online - From Sunday 22nd March we will be moving our Sunday meetings online. This new online approach will have a few different components:

- At 9 am, everyone who has provided us with their details in Church will be sent a link to a Sunday Worship Webpage. This will include an opening video, songs to worship along to (from Youtube), prayers to be prayed out loud, scriptures to be read, notices (well you couldn't have a Sunday meeting without notices), an online offering and a live-streamed sermon (see below).

- At 11 am, we will be live-streaming a sermon on our new [youtube channel](#) (please take the moment now to visit and subscribe). Whilst the person is preaching, you will have an opportunity to interact via the comments section and one of the other elders will be responding, in real-time, to those questions/comments.
- Rachel, Lorna and Nick are working on producing some age-appropriate material for tots, kids and youth, so parents will be able to engage them in discipleship activities. I think this is a fabulous opportunity for all our families to learn afresh what it means to be a discipleship community.
- The opportunity to respond to the sermon, via your discipleship groups (see below) or your running partners (see below) or via our pastoral team (again see below).



Discipleship Groups - With immediate effect, all of our discipleship groups need to find a new way of meeting as we are currently not allowed to meet in person. As a result, we've written to all of our discipleship group leaders suggesting that we all meet at our normal times as a group, but online. We think the easiest way would be via Skype. However, as a group, you can decide on what is going to suit you the best. I spend a good chunk of my week in online Skype calls and after the first few, it really isn't as daunting as you might think. As a result, can I encourage you all to be exploring downloading [Skype](#) or another online communication service that your group may choose. This might feel like a bit of an effort but we want to strongly encourage you all to give it a go! We will be sending discipleship group questions to all leaders on a weekly basis. If you are currently not part of a group we would want to *strongly* encourage you to plug into one at this time. Please email pastoralteam@wearekingsgate.org or phone 01493 442861 (option 1) to get yourself onto one of the groups.



Running Partners - Over the next few days, all of you who have signed up to join a Running Partners group will receive an email with information on how to run a Running Partner group and for those of you who needed to be assigned a group, this will inform you who you will be with. We want to suggest that for this next season, you all meet via [WhatsApp](#) or [Skype](#). As elders, we tried out WhatsApp video calling the other night and it worked fine for us (and you know we are not the most technically minded!).



Pastoral Care - We are aware that over this coming season, there may be many people who are having to self-isolate (we as a family have had to), and may be in need of help, support, prayer, or just in need of a chat. As a result, we would like to ask that if you self-isolate, would you drop pastoralteam@wearekingsgate.org an email or phone on 01493 442861 (option 1) to let us know. This way we can try and provide additional support for the whole church family. We don't want anyone to get missed out!

Giving - As you will be aware from last Sunday, as a church we are particularly vulnerable at this time, due to the fact that a significant chunk of our regular income comes from room bookings at the Centre. We anticipate that the vast majority of these will cancel over the next few days leaving a pretty big gap in our monthly running costs. We wanted to specifically ask if you would give generously over this time to help us to ride this unexpected storm. You can give online at our [Virgin Money Giving Page](#).

Technical Stuff - Help! This all sounds rather technical. We're very aware that lots of what we have suggested requires some level of technical ability. If that is making you feel slightly

worried, please don't be anxious as we've got people at hand to help! Can you message hello@wearekingsgate.org or phone 01493 442861 (option 1), so we can help you set up some of these tools. Don't miss out!

And finally, to make all of this that much easier to engage with, we're in the process of redesigning our website homepage. We hope to have it ready by the weekend, but here's a sneak peek of what it will look like.

May you know the peace of God over the days ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Bradley', written in a cursive style.

Adam Bradley
On behalf of the elders

PS. Watch out for a Video tomorrow with some more information...