

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Hadleigh Baptist Church,

We live in unprecedented times there has not been a crisis like this for the country since WWII. As Christians we have several responsibilities at this time: **To love God, love our church family and love our neighbour.**

At the moment, because of the coronavirus situation, loving our neighbour means physically distancing ourselves from people to protect the vulnerable. However, this does not mean church stops, far from it, this is an opportunity to be more like the church should be than ever before!

As a leadership team, we met on Tuesday evening and made the following decisions based upon government guidelines and the recommendations of other national Christian organisations. For the foreseeable future, we will not be meeting. So for clarity's sake, this means no Sunday services, no small groups, no Equip, no Ark. It also means that our community events such as Oasis, the service at Waterfield House and the Easter Egg Hunt are sadly cancelled.

In our recent core values series, we talked about how the church was never about a physical brick and mortar building – but is God's people being the place where God dwells by his spirit, serving one another and serving our communities in ways that remind people of Jesus.

So to continue to live up to our responsibilities, we are going to be doing the following:

We will Livestream a worship service every Sunday at 10.30 am and we would love you to join us online, worship with us, pray with us and hear from God's word together. You can do this by visiting our website [hadleighchurch.co.uk/teaching/live-stream/](http://hadleighchurch.co.uk/teaching/live-stream/) and there will be a link on the front page.

Small Groups will become virtual small groups and over the next few days, your small group leader will be in touch as to how your particular group is going to work. We are investigating online courses and we'll let you know more as things develop. This would be a really good time to link into small groups if you are not currently part of one for ongoing fellowship and support. If you wish to join a group, please contact me. The church office is 01473 829602, the church mobile is 07443 036491, or email: [pastorchristodd@hadleighbaptist.org.uk](mailto:pastorchristodd@hadleighbaptist.org.uk).

This is also a time when the church family will need to care for one another spiritually, practically and emotionally. Therefore, we want to put together a team of people who will fulfil a variety of different roles. Some people may be able to care practically by picking up shopping, prescriptions and so on. Others who may not be able to physically leave the house could text, or phone, use FaceTime and pray with people and for the church. Some of us may be able to do both. This is a season when our care for one another needs to deepen and maybe become more creative. If you would like to be part of this team get in contact with me (details above).

This is also a real opportunity for the church to serve the wider community. At a time when the supermarket shelves are empty because people are fearful, we will be the people who look out for the vulnerable and the needy and show surprising generosity. I'd encourage you to join the 'Care for our Community' group which you can find on Facebook ([facebook.com/groups/191693.../](https://facebook.com/groups/191693.../)) or give to the FoodBank ([neighbourly.com/project/5d6fcd5.../](https://neighbourly.com/project/5d6fcd5.../)). I hope that in the coming weeks, together with the other churches in town, we might be able to show what it means to be salt and light to Hadleigh and the surrounding villages.

So, while we may not see each other physically for a while remember this; the church is not closing – buildings are closing – the church is alive and well – be the church!

With Love,

Chris Todd  
**Pastor**