



**DUNFERMLINE  
WEST BAPTIST**

**JESUS SAID**

**YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD -  
LIKE A CITY ON A HILLTOP THAT CANNOT BE HIDDEN**

Dear friends,

It is with great sadness that, as per government and Baptist Union of Scotland guidelines, we will be suspending all gatherings and events in our church building immediately. However, although our building might be closed:

### **Christ's Church will always be open to anyone**

The church diaconate have been busy planning how we can ensure that our essential "Physical Isolation" does not equal "Social Isolation". It is important we remember that they are not the same thing.

Understandably, for many people this is going to be a testing period with great anxiety, fear and loneliness. However, we are privileged that in Christ we have been equipped with essential resources for such times of crisis. A bible passage that has spoken particularly powerfully to me during this time is 2 Timothy 1:7:

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

I would like to frame our strategy as a church for the next few months within the four truths highlighted in the passage. **Please read this document carefully.**

### **Do not be afraid**

In Jesus we have a message of hope that penetrates all depths of darkness. Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.' This is a message of hope in an eternal future but also a message of hope for today. Indeed, we have been given the scriptures so that they might be a lamp for our feet, a light for our paths (Psalm 119:105).

If you are not reflecting on scriptures daily than may I commend you start today because you will not find a resource more appropriate for a time such as this. Why not try:

<https://www.bibleinoneyear.org/>

I can also wholeheartedly recommend John Stott's "Through the Bible Through the Year"

### **Believe in the power of God**

God tells us not to be afraid because he has existed before anything else and he holds creation together. God delights in every detail of our lives, he does not let one second go unnoticed, he cares for us. God promises that ultimately he makes everything work out according to his plan. And so, let us come to God with prayers of petition during this time of crisis. (Revelation 1:17, Colossians 1:17, Psalm 37:23, Ephesians 1:11).



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Let us join together during this crisis every Wednesday between 11:00 and 12:00 am to pray together. (Later in this document you will find instructions outlining how you can join in over telephone or online. However, we can also pray together by following the same structure:)

### **Pray together**



- **11:00 – 11:15** Let us pray together for global leaders, local leaders and essential services during this crisis
- **11:15-11:30** Let us pray together for those who are suffering with illness across the globe
- **11:30-11:45** Let us pray together for our communities and particularly those who are afraid and isolated
- **11:45-12:00** Let us commit this pandemic to God's hands seeking his will on how we can be a light in the darkness.
- **Any other time** Let us never stop praying!

### **Demonstrate sacrificial love**

Jesus says that whatever we do for the most desolate people we do it for Him. Certainly, we are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and equally to love our neighbours as ourselves. These are the greatest commandments (Matthew. 25:40-45, Mark 12:30-31) It is no surprise, therefore, that Christian social networks that are truly obedient to Christ's commands have historically survived epidemics more intact than other groups. A 4<sup>th</sup> Century historian Eusebius comments on the impact of Christian acts of love and charity during times of pestilence:



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The zeal and piety of the Christians were obvious to all the heathen. In this awful adversity they alone gave practical proof of their sympathy and humanity. All day long some of them tended to the dying and to their burial, countless numbers with no one to care for them. Others gathered together from all parts of the city a multitude of those withered from famine and distributed bread to them all, so that their deeds were on everyone's lips, and they glorified the God of the Christians. Such actions convinced them that they alone were pious and truly reverent to God ... *God, the great, heavenly Champion of the Christians ... caused the light of peace to shine on us out of black darkness [Emphasis mine].*<sup>1</sup>

**In our Church community** we have setup a buddy system. Each of us will have approximately four people that we are to make contact with regularly for conversation, prayer and also to find out if we need to attend to any particular needs. Every buddy group overlaps ensuring that we create a fluid network in which nobody should feel left out or without help. Please keep an eye out for who your buddies are and make an effort to contact them daily, even if it is just a text.

We may not gather in our building but **we will always gather as a Church**. We are utilising various technologies to make this possible, including telephone and internet. We will be gathering weekly on Sundays 11:00am and Wednesday 11:00am. Any other meetings will be communicated in advance via our various channels. Please see the end of this document on various ways that we can gather together and communicate.

Over the last couple of months we have been developing **resources for Experience Easter** which this year included a booklet and a new website. It seems providential that during a time like this we have already created a resource that speaks directly into the situation. The resource allows people to explore the true story of Easter through its emotions of hope, compassion, friendship, anxiety, pain and new life. We will be working together with local churches to open this resource up to those in isolation, providing a platform for prayer and hope. Regularly check it out at: <https://eastermeaning.com>

Our community is not just our church it is also the **Dunfermline community**. We are currently setting up a local helpline that can be used specifically by people in isolation who are lonely and anxious. We will be looking for volunteers to handle calls (under guidance) and also donations to cover the licensing fees of the call handling facility. More information will follow as this develops.

### Exercise Self-Discipline

Let us as God's children, united with him and each other by faith and love, be firmly rooted in God's wisdom and understanding. During a time like this it is important that we exercise spiritual discernment considering carefully how we believe God is speaking into this situation.



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May we choose our words carefully so that they might be a blessing to others rather than a fuel for the fire of fear and anxiety. (Ephesians 4:13-15, Colossians 2:6-7)

Gentle words are a tree of life;  
a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit ...  
Wise words are like deep waters;  
wisdom flows from the wise like a bubbling brook  
(Proverbs 15:4, 18:4)

It is also true that often actions speak louder than words. May I encourage you during this time to seek God's counsel and be a shining example in our community. I pray that as a community our actions will speak loudly of the light that we have found in Christ.

May the Lord bless you, and protect you.  
May the Lord smile on you, and be gracious to you.  
May the Lord show you his favour, and give you his peace.  
**Your brother in Christ, Anthony.**



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## **Stay Connected**

Whether you are gathering with us via telephone, internet or in spirit we have got you covered. Our regular meetings are:

Sunday 11am – Worship meeting  
Wednesday 11am – Prayer gathering

**To join us via telephone** simply dial the following standard rate telephone number and follow the instructions:

**Dial:** 03300 945 940

After dialling in you will be asked for the following details:

**Room number:** 34847768 #

**Guest PIN:** 3805 #

**To join us via WIFI/Internet** simply open <http://dunfermlinewest.org/online/> and follow the guidance on the page.

**To keep up to date with our latest news and announcements** follow our:

- Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/dunfermlinewest/>
- Join our What's App group by downloading the app and letting Anthony or Irene know you want to join

**What? none of this makes any sense, is this even Scottish!**

Do not worry if this seems too daunting, we will help you out in any way that we can.

If in doubt feel free to contact either Anthony, Irene, Anne, Alan or Pete via:  
[anthony.luxton@dunferminewest.org](mailto:anthony.luxton@dunferminewest.org), [irene.gratton@dunfermlinewest.org](mailto:irene.gratton@dunfermlinewest.org) or use the appropriate telephone number in our directory.