

Dear Friends

To say that we are living in unprecedented times is an understatement. This is indeed a heart-breaking time for our world. It just shows how fragile the human race is and how dependent we had become on the wheels of global capitalism. An invisible microscopic virus that started in one corner of the planet is relentlessly spreading through cities, towns and villages leaving havoc, death and grief behind it. There are even predictions that the situation will get much worse before it gets better. Our way of life and worship has changed beyond anything any of us could have imagined five months ago.

Last week I communicated to you that the Leadership at Beckminster Methodist Church was planning to open the church on Sunday morning between 10.00am and 12 noon for quiet individual and private reflection. Following the Methodist Church decision to close completely all activities, and indeed the government and medical professional strong advice for people to stay at home, we have come to the decision that opening the church for quiet reflection is no longer possible. We encourage everyone to stay at home and self-isolate, only doing the essential movements as recommended by the government.

In the meantime, news of genuine acts of love, care and generosity being showed to each other give us the hope that God is at work among and within us. Alongside what scientists and medics are doing, this is the only way left for us to defeat this pandemic; to show God's love and care to ourselves and those around us. We are reminded that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has showed us that He takes suffering, illness and death head on. He does not pretend that they are not real. He suffers like us and with us; his death was painful and genuine. But his resurrection was real too. This is where we are headed. Our hope and faith are grounded in the fact that in health and sickness, in life and in death, he is with us now and that the present suffering will come to pass.

Once again let us remember that we are encouraged to be the church where we are; to know that when we are praying for those who are caught up with coronavirus whether as patients or as medics, we are worshiping; when we are enquiring about our neighbours, friends and families, we are worshiping. It is so often said that 'the church is about people not the building'. This is the time when we ask ourselves what this means and how it looks like in real life.

May God continue to reassure us of his presence with us.

Paul Nzacahayo