



## The Chelmsford Circuit

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### The June – August 2020 Circuit Preaching Plan

Dear Friends,

As the next preaching plan is being circulated, I'm taking this opportunity of writing to you all once again. At the end of March when we would normally start thinking about the next plan there has been much consideration as to whether there was indeed any point to making this plan. We decided on balance to go ahead regardless on the faint chance that things might suddenly change - to be prepared - so here you have it!

As anticipated it is almost certain that a good bit of this plan will not be deployed in the normal manner. Certainly there will be no services meeting on our premises in June. The very earliest things might 'unlock' is July, and even then I will be surprised if it happens. When there is a relaxation I suggest we need to be prepared for a number of changes to take place. It seems likely from what we observe in other parts of the world that social distancing will be required when gathering together; that there may be a limit on numbers who might be able to meet at one time; in Germany singing together is not permitted because of the possibility of it increasing the transmission of the virus.

In light of all the restrictions we have had to live with there have been some very rapid developments, and in case you are not aware of them I'd like to highlight what has been happening in recent months:

- The Circuit has established a YouTube channel ( [www.youtube.com/channel/UCrQavARuyJM1FsVUBI8I65w](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrQavARuyJM1FsVUBI8I65w) ) On this 'channel' you will find Sunday worship from Chelmsford (10.00am) and Reality Church (9.30am). These services can be watched live, which includes the opportunity to interact using 'live chat', and the services can also be watched later on at any time afterwards. People have found these an encouraging 'virtual gathering' and if you have the internet on either a computer, tablet or a smartphone please do join us.
- Our Ecumenical Partner Churches are also offering other ways of worshipping and keeping in touch at this time. Great Notley, Christ Church Braintree and St Augustine's have also been offering online worship, through Zoom and YouTube. At Christ Church Coggeshall and South Woodham Ferrers worship resources are created which can be emailed or printed
- For those without internet the Methodist Church produces a weekly worship sheet and we are encouraging those who can to print these out for those who would find them helpful.
- Finally, on Mon, Wed and Fri every week, Barry, Ramona and myself are leading a short time of evening prayer at 7.00pm on our Facebook pages. Do join us if you can.

( cont.)

These different offerings are of course nothing like gathering together face to face, but there have been a number of positive aspects to what we have been doing. The two online services combined are being watched in 3-400 homes (maybe up to 500 people?) each week!

The Facebook prayer times get scores, sometimes hundred's of views – when was the last prayer meeting or event you attended with those numbers?!

I suggest that these are really significant developments, which many are already saying should not disappear when church buildings re-open, not least because there will be many who will need to shield themselves from the virus and won't be able to come out even when others can. I think our online offerings are here to stay. Another dimension to this is the fact that some of those engaging in our online offerings include those who wouldn't necessarily want to come to worship when it happens in our buildings. There is much to reflect on in the way society has embraced a new way of doing things. Ministers in the Circuit would be very pleased to hear *your* thoughts and reflections on these matters – thanks to those who have already given feedback...

In closing may I remind you that although the future is uncertain in some respects, in our faith we trust in that certainty that God is with us in all things. I pray that in this Pentecostal season, the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit will be a living source of strength and hope.

With every blessing,

Mark