



Hi Church,

We are living in unprecedented times, with uncertainty as our new normal.

I want to take a moment to explain, how we are going to respond at this time, as Freedom Church, to the challenges of Covid-19 and how we are going to respond with both faith and common sense.

Covid-19, or the Corona Virus, has been causing untold damage to communities and individual lives around the world for the last few months on a scale that many of us have not experienced before. But as followers of God, we can look back on a history of His love, kindness and generosity over generations. We know that He promises to be with us and not forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) We know that his steadfast love never ceases, His mercies are new every morning – GREAT is His faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

When the Israelites escaped Egypt, they followed the cloud by day and the fire by night, uncertain where they were headed. God provided all that they needed, even though they did not have clarity on their final destination.

In times like this, we can either give in to fear and panic or look confidently to the God of our forefathers and put our faith in him.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5)

That's faith. To trust in God, when nothing makes sense.

But we also need to have common sense to choose to follow the advice from our leaders, while we continue to pray for them and the decisions that they are agonizing over, for the best for our nation at this time.

So here is what we are going to do with immediate effect:

1. We are going to stop gathering together on Sunday mornings at Romsey School. Instead, we are going to gather together online, in an interactive live stream. Simply head to [www.freedomchurch.uk](http://www.freedomchurch.uk) on any laptop, computer, phone or tablet, where there will be a link to the live stream. The online chat will be ready from 9:45am, ready for a 10am start to the service. It will last about an hour and you will need to arrange your own coffee! It won't be a complete replica of normal church, but it will be an opportunity to connect and learn together and to worship God in a new way. If for any reason you are not able to get online at that time, the content will be recorded and available soon afterwards. We understand that live streaming isn't necessarily engaging for the little ones in our church family. So, you might need to get creative! Tracy and her team are looking at resources for children that might prove helpful and these will be sent to families in due course. If the technical skills required to watch a live stream leave you feeling daunted, please do seek support from other technically minded people or get in touch. If you don't have a computer, laptop or tablet, you could still watch through a smart TV via our YouTube channel, you just wouldn't be able to interact in the same way. Our channel can be found here, simply look for the "live now" button at the top of the page on Sunday morning.
2. We are asking that all Connect Groups and other smaller gatherings such as Worship Teams and Youth Groups are stopped until further notice. We are encouraging groups, and their leaders, to find creative ways to continue to build community in these unprecedented times. If we can support you in this, please let us know. For more information contact your Group Leader.
3. We have a system in place to help co-ordinate care for those people who are self-isolating or vulnerable. If that is you, please let us know by emailing [pastoral@freedomchurch.uk](mailto:pastoral@freedomchurch.uk), we would love to give you a good old fashioned phone call so that we can touch base! Equally, if you have time and availability to help meet the needs of people who are self-isolating, please contact [pastoral@freedomchurch.uk](mailto:pastoral@freedomchurch.uk) and let us know. Jo Ibbott and the team will then be in touch. We are continuing to operate the Romsey Foodbank as best we can and are putting measures in place to be in a position to help people in financial hardship to purchase food if required.
4. Our wonderful Staff Team are moving towards working from home, but they will still be fully accessible and keen to find creative ways to support our church family. They will be in touch with their teams of volunteers in due course. Please do continue to pray for, and support, the team as they navigate this change. They do a great job.
5. We have decided that ongoing communication will move to one central location. To find the latest updates, news and information simply head to [www.freedomchurch.uk](http://www.freedomchurch.uk) and click on the "latest news" button. We will endeavor to share these same updates by email, Facebook or SMS wherever we can, but please do start to check our homepage regularly.

Church is not being cancelled or postponed, we are just learning to operate in a different way. The church has survived for thousands of years through many a difficult season, but God has always been consistent – he is the same yesterday, today and forever!

Let's make an extra effort to look out for each other as we find new ways to worship Jesus and to create community.

Praying for you Freedom Church in this new season of faith and common sense.

All our love,

Sim and Lottie.