



Hi Church Family, hope you are keeping well?

After almost 3 months of lockdown and social isolation as a nation, I am sure like me, you have been through a variety of emotions. Whether struggling for space because all the children are home-schooling and you need to concentrate on working at home yourself, or whether you are living on your own and desperate for real community, not just a socially distanced walk.

Likewise, in Freedom Church, as a leadership team we have been going through a variety of emotions. Bouncing between excitement at the new opportunities that we are facing with more people engaging with church online than ever before but balancing that with a concern over how the future might look. How do we sustain what has been created and ensure we are fully prepared for the unknown future as lockdown eases? We would love to hear your prayerful thoughts on how Freedom Church could look in the future – please email us with your ideas.

We have been so impressed with the way you have all responded as a church family. There are so many stories of people looking out for each other, making phone calls, popping in on each other (from a distance!), sending cards, connecting via online video meetings or social media, donations of food and finance to the Foodbank as well as supporting the CAP Debt Centre. The morning prayer at 8.30am has been a real highlight with over 50 different church members leading us in a variety of ways. Online Connect Groups and courses have been ongoing as an essential support to our community. Freedom Kids Friday with such amazing creativity and memorable characters such as Pirate Penne and Snot have kept us going while the worship and tech team have been outstanding at the way they have served the church for our Sunday livestream. So many people giving so much of their time to ensure that we keep the mission alive to lead people in the pursuit of Jesus to see lives and communities transformed.

Soul Purpose

It is timely that we are presently exploring the health of our soul through the present teaching series entitled Soul Purpose. We are not a Body with a Soul, but a Soul with a Body! We want to be a healthy community and loving God with our bodies, minds, heart and soul. Please do take time to watch or listen to the teaching and complete your Soul Assessment Survey at www.freedomchurch.uk/soulpurpose - it will really help you get some idea of your soul's well-being at this time. If you do need further support, then please do contact the Pastoral Team (pastoral@freedomchurch.uk) and they will be pleased to help.

Family News

For the last few months Tracy & Fraser Norbury have been looking at the possibility of re-locating with their family to another country to work with the overseas charity Mission Aviation Fellowship (www.maf-uk.org). Although delayed by the present pandemic, they have both been offered roles to work in Papua New Guinea once they have completed some theological study. This will probably begin in January 2021, but much depends on travel restrictions. Tracy & Fraser play a key role in our church family with Tracy leading our Freedom Kids and Fraser as a Church Trustee. They will be a big loss to us, but we are excited for the adventure they are embarking upon. This is also a significant change for them and I know they would love to talk to you about it, so please do get in touch with them. We will be able to plan more once their timings are confirmed.

Building update

We also realise that it has been long time since we have updated you with where we are regarding the purchasing of a large piece of land to create a purpose-built facility that will benefit the mission of our church and be a gift to our local community. The good news is that this is still all proceeding, but at a much slower rate than we had hoped. There have been some delays in the planning application, partly due to the natural delays caused by Covid-19 as well as some flooding concerns raised from the Environmental Agency. We have sought some expert planning advice on this, and Tim is working on a pre-planning application to complete the next steps and discover if there are any other hurdles that we may need to overcome before we start building.

We were meant to be having a further Giving Sunday this month, but it has not been possible at this time. I know that many of you have been continuing to give above and beyond to this - thank you. Some of you have also committed to making a pledge to the building through the 'buy a brick' scheme. If, for any reason, this is not possible at this time due to a change in circumstances, please do contact Tim (tim@freedomchurch.uk) to discuss further.

Thank you!

We have been blown away by the generosity of the people of Freedom Church at this time. Thank you. Your generous giving to our Freedom Matters programme will enable us to help people recover from Covid-19 in the uncertain months ahead. And thank you to each one of you that gives regularly to the work of Freedom Church. It has enabled us to restructure our office space into a studio, give to families in need both locally and in Uganda through our Freedom Fund and help us plan effectively for the future. Thank you

I felt God speak to me recently that this is a season of 'hiddenness' – that we may not be able to do all that we want to do, but that we should trust God for the new normal. In the same way that seeds start to grow under the soil and caterpillars develop inside a cocoon, we are being hidden to be prepared before being revealed. Our present hiddenness is an opportunity for us to be prepared for just the right time when we will slowly emerge into a new future.

"The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all." Luke 12:2

We miss you all greatly and cannot wait to be able to worship God as his people altogether again!

All our love,

Sim & Lottie