

...a warm welcome to ebenezer...

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## Our buildings and Government Restrictions

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Neil says:

Our buildings are closed in line with the government restrictions imposed on buildings. The only permitted access is for a minister of religion or a worship leader to stream a service without an audience, or for a church employee who has to access the building to do their job. Neil is checking the building and the post once a week when he live-streams the service.

Thank you for staying away thereby protecting yourself and also maintaining the building as a safe place for services to be streamed from.

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## Today: Father's Day

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11.00 am Live stream! on Facebook

**Ephesians 5:8-14 Walk in the Light**

‘Wake up, sleeper,  
rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.’

Ephesians 5:14 (NIVUK)

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## Sunday 28th June

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11.00 am Live stream! on Facebook

**Ephesians 5:15-20 Be filled with the Spirit**

...be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:18-20 (NIVUK)

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## Sunday Gatherings at Ebenezer

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*Neil, Sheena and Paul say:*

As the lockdown restrictions gradually ease and July approaches with the possibility that places of worship will be allowed to open again, we have spent time as Elders prayerfully considering how we would respond if we were told the building could be re-opened on Sundays. After much consideration we have come to the view that whilst social distancing measures of 2 metres are in place, we *wouldn't* be re-opening for Sunday Gatherings. Aware that some might be disappointed or puzzled by that decision we want to take an opportunity to share our thinking with you so that you too can prayerfully reflect on it and let us know what you feel God is saying.

The context for the decision is the realisation that we have just over 170 chairs in our building and regularly fill 100 to 140 of them, sometimes more. The church family that gathers on a Sunday ranges from infants through to some in their 80s, and we are blessed to have a healthy number of children join us in worship. With social distancing we think we could seat around 25, possibly slightly more if you had "blocks" for a single household to sit at.

The first consideration was children. Normally children are "free range": would we be able to force them to stay in a chair throughout a gathering and, even if we could, would that be desirable? It would be a massive culture change from "everybody is family and mingle" to "sit still and don't interact". Then we have some younger children and those with additional needs who have limited or perhaps nil understanding of social distancing.

The second consideration was that to accommodate everybody we would have to have between 4 and 6 gatherings on any given Sunday, even if some were shielding at home. There are a few implications from this:

- ✚ those leading would be exhausted after 4-6 straight gatherings
- ✚ how could we deep clean between each of 4-6 successive gatherings?
- ✚ how would we decide who came at what time?
- ✚ how would we handle visitors (and we get some most weeks)?

The final consideration was theological: what is a Sunday Gathering? We believe it to be the family of God coming together to worship and fellowship; that doesn't happen if we have to split into between 4 and 6 disparate groups meeting at different times.

So, from a *practical* perspective we can't see how socially distanced meetings could work in our current buildings. From a *theological* perspective we are not happy with the idea of artificially splitting the church family up and requiring us to meet at different times. On reflection we felt the limited online services we have (limited in what they can do as opposed to limited in frequency) were a better way of maintaining an inclusive community. We are also mindful that these are supplemented with online quizzes, mid-week small groups, morning coffee meetings, prayer meetings, and so on.

We do feel that when the 2 metre restrictions are relaxed then we would change our view, even if there were still some people shielding. The thinking there was that the vast majority could meet together and we would propose to the church that we invest in technology where necessary to enable those shielding to be as much "in the room" as we possibly could make it; to that end the VP/PA team have been working on "post-lockdown" technology options.

As we said at the top of this note, we would welcome your prayerful reflections on the situation, so please let us know what you feel God is saying at this time.

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## Ebenezer Baptist Church on Facebook

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Did you know that you can still read the church Facebook page even if you don't want to join Facebook? Just type Facebook and Ebenezer Baptist Church Scarborough in your search engine, and click on 'not now' when it asks you to sign in or to join!!

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## Sermons on our website

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*Rich Grassam says:*

As well as the video of the sermon on our Facebook page, you can **listen** to the sermons (audio only) on our website. There is also a dedicated page for the Ephesians series if you want to catch up or listen again. They are under the Resources tab at [www.rockofhelp.org.uk](http://www.rockofhelp.org.uk)

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## Mission Updates

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Find them on the church website, Resources tab, Noticeboard  
<http://www.rockofhelp.org.uk/resources>

-  YBA Newsround 18<sup>th</sup> June
-  Release International June 2020
-  BMS A Nation in Exile
-  MAF June Flight Log
-  Locked down with ISIS Release International
-  Worldshare June Prayer Calendar
-  BMS Prayer Guide May – August

*enews editor says:*

I have a number of copies of

-  Engage: The BMS World Mission magazine, Issue 47 2020
- and
-  MAF Flying for Life July – September 2020.

If you would like to read either, or both, please email me at [enews@rockofhelp.org.uk](mailto:enews@rockofhelp.org.uk) with your name and address and I will post them out to you.

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## Ed Preston: Update from [uccf.thechristianunions](http://uccf.thechristianunions)

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*Excerpts from a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> June from Richard Cunningham, UCCF Director:*

Dear Friends

I would like to thank you again for your support of Ed Preston in his work alongside the Christian Unions. We are very grateful for your ongoing partnership, particularly over these last few weeks.



I'm writing with an update about the period of Furlough leave (on full pay) we have given many of our staff, including Ed.

I'm delighted to report that we were successful in our application to the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and have received a contribution for April and May salaries. We are grateful to the Lord for this provision and to the UK government in supporting a Christian charity. Thank you for your prayers in this.

It has been a great encouragement to see how the Christian Unions have 'returned' from their Easter break and continued to give their coursemates and uni friends the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Christ.

At a time when social isolation is being felt more keenly by many, the loving and welcoming community (albeit virtual) of CUs is providing a striking witness. Of course, there are challenges to overcome, but we pray the Lord uses this time to draw many more students to Himself.

Although our universities remain closed, we are committed to making sure that we will be ready to reach the new intake of students coming up to university.

We are gradually bringing our staff back from Furlough leave over the month of June to form different work parties and to focus on specific projects so we can properly resource CUs for the different landscape in September.

Do please pray that Ed and other staff will be sustained and refreshed and be able to be effective and creative within this different landscape.

Some seekers will be willing to join CUs' online activities who would have been more cautious about coming to physical events. However, the challenge and opportunity will be drawing them into the actual physical communities of gathered Christians once the gatherings are permitted. We realise that many reading this will be finding this economic downturn greatly alarming and constraining. We do not take your continued prayerful and financial support for granted. **Once again, can I say how grateful we are for your faithful and generous support of Ed.** Thank you so much for standing with us at this unusual and demanding time.

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## **Yorkshire Baptist Association 2020 Church Prayer Diary**

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Please pray this week for:

- ✚ Lee Mount Baptist Church, Halifax  
<https://www.leemountbaptist.co.uk/>
- ✚ Lister Hill Baptist Church, Horsforth  
<https://www.lhbc.org.uk/>



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## The Blessing

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The worship song, The Blessing, with Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes, was recorded live at Elevation Ballantyne and premiered on 6<sup>th</sup> March and by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 it had had **17,009,924** views! The Youtube introduction explains how it came to be written, and the song runs for just over 12 minutes.

The lyric begins with the 'Priestly blessing' from **Numbers 6:22-27** (NIVUK) and draws upon many other scriptural truths.

The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

""The Lord bless you  
and keep you;

the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;

the Lord turn his face towards you  
and give you peace."''

'So they will put my name on the Israelites,  
and I will bless them.'

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God;  
he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love  
to a thousand generations of those who love him  
and keep his commandments.

Deuteronomy 7:9(NIVUK)

If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know  
you and continue to find favour with you.

Remember that this nation is your people.'

The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you,  
and I will give you rest.'

Then Moses said to him, 'If your Presence does not go with  
us, do not send us up from here

Exodus 33:13-15 (NIVUK)

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid;  
do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God  
will be with you wherever you go.'

Joshua1:9 (NIVUK)

The Lord will keep you from all harm –  
he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
both now and for evermore.

Psalms 121:7,8 (NIVUK)

What, then, shall we say in response to these things?  
If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31 (NIVUK)

Here is the Youtube link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmVzM4>

For a fuller analysis, although you may not agree with some of  
the comments, look up this link!!

<https://www.thebereantest.com/elevation-worship-feat-cody-carnes-kari-jobe-the-blessing>



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## **Be still and know that I am God**

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Neil says:

Heather Rowe has shared a word with us that she felt God had given her and she asked us to weigh it.

When we met as Elders, we discussed it in the context of a wider discussion of

**“What is God saying to Ebenezer just now, and what are we going to do about it?”**

We recalled that God has always said

“Be still and know that I am God” and we felt that this is a season to be still before God.

We are therefore asking the church to deliberately take time to sit with God and to ask him what he is saying to us at this time.

We spent a year in prayer 2017/18 asking God for vision, and we believe that vision is still (at least broadly) right (<https://www.rockofhelp.org.uk/our-vision>). We think the question now is:

**How do we build on that during lockdown and beyond?**

We might have got the question wrong, or it may be that God has fresh vision for us.

Whatever the focus, please pray and share with us anything you hear God say.

Below is the word Heather brought. We share it with no edit or interpretation so as to leave it to you to discern for yourself if it is from God and, if it is, what God is saying to us all through it.

*Neil, Sheena and Paul.*

This morning I caught up with your live stream from yesterday, and towards the end I was praying, asking God for an encouraging word for the church.

As I was praying I saw bubbles rising, like the bubbles in a fizzy drink. I was puzzled as to what this might mean, and I looked up what causes the fizz in carbonated drinks. This is what I read:-

'The fizz that bubbles up when you crack open a can of soda is carbon dioxide (co<sub>2</sub>). Soft drink manufacturers add this tingling froth by forcing carbon dioxide and water into your soda at high pressures - up to 1,200 pounds per square inch. The 'fssst' you hear is millions of carbon dioxide molecules bursting out of their sweet, watery prisons, where they have been held against their will.

'An unopened soda can is virtually bubble-free because the pressure inside the can keeps the carbon dioxide dissolved in the liquid. When you crack open the can, you release the pressure and allow the gas bubbles to wiggle free from the liquid and rise to the surface. This requires energy because in order for the gas to break free from the liquid it has to overcome the force holding the liquid together.

'One way to input energy is to shake the beverage. This adds the zing needed to unlock more tiny bubbles and add real splash to a celebration.' (From Live [Science.com](http://Science.com))

The other day while walking I was crying out to God for our country, to eradicate this virus and send revival. While praying the verse came to mind.....

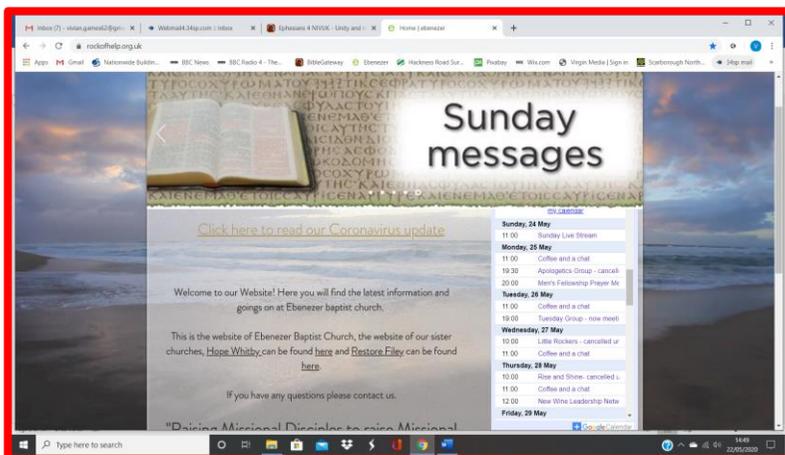
'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin and heal their land.'

This morning part of the following verse came to mind, I looked it up and it is from Luke 6, verse 38

'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

This is a waiting time, a time of preparation for God's people. A time of confinement, a time given to us to humble ourselves, to pray, to seek God's face, to turn from sin. Then readiness and release of the Holy Spirit in revival.

## Keeping in Touch: Using the calendar on the church website



The calendar is on the front page of our website

<https://www.rockofhelp.org.uk/>

Use the up/down arrows at the right side of the calendar to get to the date, then left click on the event and all the details of how to join are revealed!

### Summary

#### Monday - Saturday

11:00 : Coffee and a Chat

#### Monday

20:00 Men's Fellowship Prayer Meeting

#### Tuesday

19:00 Tuesday Group

#### Friday

20:00 Men's Night Out

#### Saturday

08:30 Weekly Prayer Meeting

Please contact Neil or Sheena for information about keeping in touch without using the internet.

For further updates please keep an eye on our website and on our Facebook page as well as here in enews.