**Freeland Church Coronavirus Pandemic Measures**

*May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble!*

*May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!*

*May he send you help from the sanctuary*

*And give you support from Zion!*

*Psalm 20v1-2*

23/03/2020

Dear Fellow members,

I am writing this the day after the first Sunday ever probably that we have not had a worshipping congregation in Freeland, with the coronavirus epidemic growing apace now in the UK and the prospect of a complete national “lockdown” in the coming weeks. It may well be several months before we see a return to some semblance of normality. In the circumstances I am detailing at some length the measures we are proposing to take in Freeland to support members and adherents and hope this will be helpful.

**Sunday Worship**

As you will now be aware congregational worship services on Sundays have been suspended until further notice. Yesterday Kenneth Gray and some members of the worship team produced a “service” in the church which was livestreamed on the internet through “Facebook” at the usual worship time of 10.30am. People on 69 different devices (smartphones/computers) including some entire families, probably 100 or more people in total were able to “tune in” and watch and listen. Kenneth preached powerfully and it was a moving experience for those of us onlooking from home. If you have internet access but missed this yesterday I would encourage you to log on to Facebook on future Sunday mornings as we plan to continue with this. If you have a smartphone or computer or tablet (eg I Pad) but are unsure what to do –

* Internet search for Facebook
* Create Facebook personal account(, and an email address if you do not already have one)
* Log in to the Facebook account on your device
* Then search for the Freeland church page
* Scroll down to find the “Livestream Posts” at 10.30am on Sunday morning
* You can watch the service live or return and play it at a later date
* If you encounter difficulty you may contact me and I will get someone with greater IT proficiency than me to advise!

If you do not have internet access there is instead the option of Radio 4 and Radio Scotland church services or “Songs of Praise” on BBC1.

For those with internet access who wish to check out services elsewhere the Church of Scotland website can give further information.

**Midweek Meetings and Activities**

All midweek meetings and activities are also suspended until further notice. Kenneth Gray plans to issue a midweek message on Wednesday 25th March at 7pm by the same technology as above, and it is possible that it will become a regular event during the present crisis. Midweek prayer will be mentioned in the prayer section below.

**Prayer**

Although we cannot meet together for prayer at this time we propose the following-

* Uniting together in our own homes in prayer every Wednesday at 8pm for a time of prayer for the world, for the UK, for our church and for our families and friends. If you cannot manage this particular time then choose a time that is feasible for you.
* Jack McHugh has posted a list of points for prayer on the church website and this will be updated from time to time.
* Jack facilitates a prayer chain where he e-mails individuals with requests for prayer. If you wish to become a member of the prayer chain please contact Jack or myself. If you wish to submit a request for prayer again please contact Jack or myself. (Please note if you are making a prayer request for someone else obtain their consent for this before submitting information.)

**Pastoral Support**

The current situation precludes much pastoral visiting taking place but the pastoral support team are able to offer pastoral support to people by phone. If you would welcome support at the end of a phone for whatever reason please let us know-you can do this either by emailing Marion Whiteford, the Pastoral Team Coordinator, directly (email Marion at alex.whiteford@hotmail.co.uk ) or alternatively contact us through the contact point for grocery delivery help which is explained below (phone or email options) and your request will be forwarded to Marion.

In addition to pastoral support it may be some individuals will simply feel a bit socially isolated and would welcome being paired up with a “phone buddy” in the church for some weekly phone contact. Again you can use the above contacts for that.

**Grocery Delivery**

People may struggle to obtain groceries in the coming months. They may be self-isolating as they are in an “at risk” group for severe infection, or they may have the infection or be a close contact of someone with the infection; or it may be that their usual support chain has broken down through illness. If this applies to you, and you have no family or friend support readily available, and you are unable to place an “on line” food order with a supermarket, then you may seek help from the church. We have some volunteers ready to assist with this. At the end of this article please see the “Freeland help” form which outlines the information we require from you. If you have internet access please email freelandhelp@btinternet.com for a form and then complete and return it by email. If you do not have internet access then please use the phone number supplied (07503838269) and details will be taken directly over the phone.

**Volunteers**

I have been encouraged by the number of volunteers who have come forward already to offer help. This is obviously an evolving situation and it may be much more volunteer support will be required in a few weeks or months’ time than right now. If you would like to be added to the “volunteer list” for practical help please let me know.

**Contact Details**

I have a record of all office bearers’ email addresses and phone numbers but for the rest of the congregation this contact information is patchy. I would be grateful if you could supply your email address and phone number if you have not already done so. If anyone is supplying me with contact information for a friend please check you have their consent before you do so.

**Finance Update**

Included with the email attachments for Freeland News articles is a finance update from John Lindsay. Normally at the end of March each year we have our annual stated meeting in the church which is open to all, and where the trustees’ annual report including detailed accounts for the preceding year is presented. It is not perhaps feasible to send this large document out electronically with the other Freeland News articles, but if any member wishes to view it please let me know and I will send it on. Paper copies will be available when normal business resumes.

With best wishes at this difficult time

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Session Clerk

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