

Evangel Bathurst Covid-19 Update as of March 17

Hello Evangel Bathurst, Pastor Andrew here with the latest on the current Covid-19 situation in our nation and how it affects us. This has been a constantly changing and unfolding situation which we have all watched with concern. We know as followers of Jesus that we serve a mighty God and powerful healer. We don't deny God's ability to protect and strengthen his people. We are people of faith. Yet we are reminded also of Jesus' own words when Satan tempted him to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple because God had promised to protect him: Jesus said, "It is written, you shall not test the Lord your God." It is not a lack of faith to use wisdom. These two gifts of God - wisdom and faith - work hand in hand.

Yesterday, our Prime Minister asked Canadians to stay home if at all possible and to limit the gathering of public groups. Likewise, the Chief Medical Officer of New Brunswick strongly recommended the closure of day cares, theatres, cinemas, training centres, and other places where people gather. In consultation with the church board, we have decided to halt all public gatherings for the next two weeks and to reassess at that point. Here is what that means:

- we will be postponing our Annual Business Meeting until further notice. Our current board will remain in place until such time as we are able to convene a congregational meeting.
- We will be moving our Thursday prayer meeting online to an app called Zoom. You can use your computer, smartphone or tablet to participate in these prayer meetings. Zoom will also be used for Elevate Youth on Sunday evenings and possibly other online group gatherings.
- We will be providing a livestreamed worship service on Sunday mornings at 10:30 that will involve a full worship experience and we will be continuing our message series "Got Fruit?" as we learn and grow together.
- We will also provide a children's online experience for all of our Kids JAM kids. It will be available by Sunday morning through our Kids JAM Facebook Group.
- Also, our Connect Groups will not be meeting, but instead we will be offering a church wide online Connect Group on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 through the Zoom app. You will receive links to all of our Zoom events through emails. If we don't have your email address and you want to be included in our email updates, please make sure you let us know!

These are unusual times and we understand this feels unnatural to not be able to gather together in person for worship. However, we want to comply with our government's recommendations as they do the best they can to help protect the

most vulnerable people in our communities. But even though we are not gathering together physically we are still a family and need to stay connected. We will be calling every home this week and making sure you are doing alright, to see if there is some way we can help you in this crisis, and to make sure you are able to get to a computer Sunday to participate with us as we worship together. We also want to challenge you to stay connected to one another. I challenge you to call at least 3 people per day to connect and fellowship together on the phone. Encourage one another. Pray together. Let this be a situation that causes us to pull together and become even stronger as a faith community!

During this crisis, we plan to keep the church office open as usual Monday to Thursday 10am to 3pm until further notice. If you need to visit the office, please make ensure you are symptom-free. We want to ask you to continue to remember your tithes and giving to Evangel as our expenses do not change during this time. You can drop your offering off at the office through the week, or you can use one of our online options: you can send an eTransfer to giving@evangelbathurst.ca or you can give through our website or the Tithely app.

We want to encourage you to consider generosity to those around you as well during this time. Many people will be struggling. We think of retail and restaurant employees who will take a big hit financially, and health workers who will be stretched beyond their limits. If you are headed to the store, consider your elderly and vulnerable neighbours and offer to pick up anything they may need. Let's be a force for good and blessing in this time.

If we can help you, please do not hesitate to call and let us know. Seriously, if you need someone to help you get groceries or make a trip to the pharmacy, we are here to help!

Please know that we are praying for you and we love and care for each one of you! God bless and give you His peace during this unusual time. See you online soon!