

# Church Advisory (19 Dec)

19 Dec 2020

Dear Hebronites

## **GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR 2021**

I greet you in the name of our Prince of Peace, whose humble birth over 2,000 years ago we commemorate in this Advent season. This has been a tumultuous year as the unexpected pandemic descended upon us at a frenzied pace. As the events escalated, we struggled to regain an optimal equilibrium for more effective functioning. Sometimes we succeeded, sometimes we could have done better. But we thank God that he remains ever in control.

Indeed, we are grateful to God that in Singapore, we have fared better than in many other places, despite fears, concerns and uncertainties. Let us continue to uphold the Singapore government as we have been doing, as it leads the nation through the current crisis.

Last Monday, we cheered at the news that Singapore will soon enter Phase 3 of the lifting of the circuit breaker restrictions. The year 2021 also beckons and therefore it is fitting for me to write to inform you about seven things that we should expect, come January.

## **1. Hebron's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The year 2021 will be Hebron's 50<sup>th</sup> year of ministry as a church. We thank God for his grace and faithfulness over half a century in using us for gospel ministry. While Singapore will likely continue in an economic recession in 2021, we will mark the year in ways that are meaningful, spending wisely for a good celebration, and emphasising thanksgiving to God, bonding of the Hebron family, and service to the community. More details to come.

## **2. Worship service attendance in Phase 3**

When Phase 3 starts on 28 December, the capacity for congregational worship meetings will increase to 250, or 5 zones of 50 persons each. Live performance elements will also be permitted at the service. However, as the news was only just released, regulations from the authorities are pending before we can proceed with definitive steps. Tentatively, however, we can look forward to having some Hebronites experience live worship at Bethel Sanctuary where currently the live streaming production goes on, while the rest will meet at Jerusalem Sanctuary to experience the worship service via live streaming. Do stay tuned for updates.

## **3. Theme for 2021: "Towards a Serving Discipleship"**

The anchor scripture (which we will memorise) will be Colossians 1:10 *"...to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,*

*fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*" Good works or service will be the watchword for the year. We will encourage Hebronites to find and commit to an area of service (whether within Hebron or without) so that, as Christ's disciples, we bear "fruit in every good work."

#### **4. Sermon series for 2021**

The pastoral team will preach through 1 Corinthians. For better engagement with the text prior to the preaching of each 1 Corinthians sermon, a companion Bible study guide will be made available to Hebronites to use during the week. All are invited to gather online on Saturday at 8pm for an hour to review our answers. I will lead the session. My hope is that this will help us all grasp the message of 1 Corinthians for our collective discipleship journey.

#### **5. Bible reading for 2021**

In line with the anchor verse for 2021, let us commit to read through the New Testament that we might increase "in the knowledge of God" in the new year. To help us, we will use the Navigator's 5x5x5 reading plan, that is, 5 minutes a day, 5 days a week, and 5 ways to dig deeper. The soft copy of the reading plan is available at A limited quantity of the hard copy of the plan will be made available in church, on a first-come-first-served basis, from 20 December.

## **6. Scripture memory exercise**

Since Colossians 1:10, the anchor scripture for 2021, is short, we will also memorise five other scriptures (in ESV), as follows: 1 John 5:11-12; John 16:24; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9; and Proverbs 3:5-6. Participants of the Foundational Bible Studies have memorised these scriptures as they covered lessons concerning the assurance of their Christian faith. They are not difficult verses. I am confident that we are able to take six scriptures next year!

## **7. Cessation of 8:40am Holy Communion (HC)**

From 3 January, we will revert to serving HC only on first Sundays during the service. With up to 150 Hebronites attending the service in Phase 3, the need for the 8:40am HC on other Sundays will be diminished. Pre-packaged HC elements will continue to be available for collection prior to the first Sunday of the month for use at home as you follow the service via live streaming. Please register for the elements as usual.

I wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and a fruitful year in the Lord in 2021. Even as we plan, we now know from this year's experience to expect the unexpected! But let us be assured that "those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever" (Psalm 125:1). Peace and grace to you. Amen.

Rev Wong Shin Hoe

Senior Pastor

Hebron Bible-Presbyterian Church

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# **Church Advisory (17 Apr)**

17 April 2020

Dear Hebronites

## **PASTORAL LETTER IN CIRCUIT-BREAKER TIME**

I bring you greetings in the blessed name of our Triune God, His ways and thoughts are higher than ours, his steadfast love never ceases, and his mercies never come to an end.

As Singapore enters the second week of elevated safe

distancing measures, we, the church, must brace ourselves for the deepening impact of not meeting together. Our physical presence as the body of Christ is both a witness to the unchurched and a comforting ministry to the saints. The current circumstances are certainly forcing us all to rethink how to be church in terms of fellowship among believers and outreach to pre-believers. We also have to be creative in how ministry continues to be expressed and carried out. It is likely that the changes that we make will stay with us for a long time even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. For example, it is not hard to see that the church will continue to harness technology for teaching, fellowship and outreach as it has begun to do at very short notice.

Meanwhile, as we adjust towards a new normal, our commitment to Christ and his church cannot be less. We must be even more intentional and deliberate in the disciplines of discipleship. It is on this note that I wish to share with you four ministry platforms in which you can participate.

**Discipling children** Parents of P5 and P6 children are reminded to join with their children to participate in the Crossbeam video lessons that are live streamed only at 9am on Sundays. This will enable you to lead your own children in discussion after the video presentation. You may then join in the worship service via video streaming at a later time in the morning.

**Prayer** We have moved the weekly prayer meeting online to 8am on Sunday. This serves as a good way to prepare for

the worship service at 9am. Ps Nat coordinates the prayer meeting. Please contact him for access to the online meeting platform.

**Bible** Brother Daniel Sim leads a group of men in reading the Bible on most Sundays of the month. This is one way in which we can be encouraged and held accountable in taking in Scripture. Any man who wishes to join may contact Daniel directly or if not, you may also check with me.

**Virtual fellowship** Just so that we can see familiar faces during this time apart and don't forget what our brothers and sisters look like, please send photo images of yourself and your family participating in worship at home to church@. We wish to show them at the end of the service every week.

As you would already know, we would not be able to hold congregational worship services at least until after 4 May. Our weekly worship service has gone online and is streamed at 9am on Sunday. Please visit the Hebron BP Church website at for the link to the video stream. You will need a Facebook account to gain access. We are aware that some of you who do not have Facebook accounts have been unable to do so. We apologise for this but wish to assure you that we are taking steps to make the video stream available on other platforms as well.

The pastoral team and the Session members continue to be available for prayer, pastoral care and encouragement. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the

pastoral team or Session member should you need help. At the same time, may I remind you that you can also encourage your leaders as many of you have done. Even a short text asking, "How are you?" will speak volumes of brotherly love and mutual concern. Do not underestimate your own ability to bless!

May God bless and keep you and your loved ones in his grace. Take time to commit to memory Ephesians , our theme scripture for the year, which says,

<sup>22</sup> to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

May this season of separation help each of us grow and be transformed ever more into the likeness of Christ.

Rev Wong Shin Hoe

Senior Pastor

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# Church Advisory (21 Mar)

Dear Hebronites,

## SUSPENSION OF WORSHIP SERVICES

This past week has been a whirlwind of changes as Singapore

leaders sought a more and more targeted response to the COVID-19 situation.

Over a month ago, I said to you that we would continue with our essential

ministries while holding off non-essential ones. The reason for doing so was

because, as Christians, we have an unfinished work of discipleship as our God-given

priority. In a few short weeks, we have also discovered new ways of expressing

and practising discipleship. From absolute scratch, the live streaming of our

Sunday 9am English and Mandarin services now serves Hebronites who worship at

home. We talked about moving our small group meetings and Bible learning online

and some groups have experimented with various meeting apps in readiness for

implementation. The Children's Ministry urged parents to practise home

discipleship by teaching their own children should the

children's activities  
come to a halt. The pastoral team and I have met and  
prayed with Hebronites via  
teleconference.

The time has now come for us put into effect Plan B.  
Yesterday,  
the Government issued a directive to limit the size of  
gatherings, including  
religious events, to no more than 250 persons. This  
significantly affects our  
ability to continue with our Sunday worship services and  
activities since our  
Sunday attendance, even during the current season, is  
easily more than twice  
that limit (praise the Lord!). Desiring to respond as a  
good corporate citizen,  
**the Hebron Session has decided to suspend all Sunday  
worship services and  
ancillary ministries occurring on Sundays with immediate  
effect.** We are  
mindful that just up ahead are Hebron's 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Service (5  
April), Good Friday Service (10 April), and Easter Sunday  
Service (12 April). The  
Session will review its decision nearer those times to  
ensure not only  
compliance with law but also how Hebron and Hebronites  
continue to fulfil our  
gospel mission. However, we do need to be prepared for the  
suspension to last  
until there is a positive change in the Government's  
stance on mass gatherings.

In the meantime, the worship team will still meet in church on Sunday mornings to lead in worship. Their act of service will be live streamed at 9am to enable Hebronites to participate in the act of worship online. **The link to the live stream is available on the Hebron website,**

. Please consider gathering as families and as YDGs, LGs, KGs and other small groups to praise God together. This is to preserve a semblance of community as you worship. You may also take the opportunity of the weekly gathering to discuss the sermon after the service is over, and pray for one another. Of course, as you gather, please remember to take the necessary health precautions, practise social responsibility, and ensure sufficient social distancing for the love of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

The **Hebron website** will become an important point of connection for us all during this time. Please refer to it regularly for updates. The Hebron News and the weekly service programme and Family News will continue to be updated and made available there.

As mentioned last Sunday, the English congregation **Children's Ministry** will be completely suspended for now. The

superintendents and teachers will contact parents and provide them with materials for them to carry on discipling their children at home. The leaders of other Bible classes and ministries will contact you to inform you of new arrangements. However, if you are in doubt, please do not hesitate to contact them for clarification. The pastoral team and the leaders continue to be available and contactable during this time for prayer, encouragement, visitation, and pastoral care. Remember, you can bless them too!

Notwithstanding the foregoing, from time to time during this period, the leaders may have need to convene meetings involving up to a few dozen people, whether for training or dissemination of information. For example, the Hebron **Annual Congregational Meeting will still continue at tomorrow**. This is a regulatory meeting which we cannot defer. Given the circumstances, we will continue to receive proxy forms from Hebronites who now decide not to attend the meeting in person. You may send an image of a duly signed proxy form to any Hebron staff member. Although we will continue to receive proxy forms right up to the time of the meeting, please try and let us have the form by 3pm today in order for there to be enough

time for processing.

For tomorrow's purposes, please do not park your cars in the church grounds.

Please follow the signage to be provided that will direct you to the usual screening procedures before you enter the meeting venue at Zion Sanctuary (Level 3).

Finally, I have mentioned to you before that in every crisis is an opportunity for growth. Never before in church history have we as Christians had to make a decision such as this, to take the church, not underground, but online! Let us discern what God is and will be teaching us in this precious experience. However, do let's continue to bear in mind the following truths:

- Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body (Ephesians 5:23)
- We are brothers and sisters in Christ, with God as our Father (Matthew 6:5-18) and Christ our Brother (Hebrews 2:11)
- We owe one another the continuing debt to show love in action (Romans 13:8-10)
- We are called to bear witness of Christ (Acts 1:8) in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2) by godly living and gentle, respectful words (1 Peter 3:15)
- God's Holy Spirit has bestowed gifts to each of

us with which to bless the church (1 Corinthians  
12:4-7)

May God do a great work among us, in us, and through us  
for  
his glory even in this unusual situation. May God's peace  
and grace gird and  
nourish you from day to day.

In Christ,

Rev Wong Shin Hoe

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