

## **POLICY FOR THE CONTROL OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

### **PURPOSE:**

To define Lincoln Baptist Church's (LBC) arrangements on the control of the transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Further guidance is given in respect to the pastoral care of the Church members and the continuation of Gospel ministry.

### **BIBLICAL CONTEXT:**

As the spread of COVID-19 continues to get worldwide press, it is crucial that the church communes with God and his word. Fear and panic spread as further cases are identified and as the death toll increases. Yet as Christians we remember what God has said in his word, 2 Timothy 1:7 (*"for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control"*), 1 Peter 5:7 (*"cast all your anxieties on Him, because he cares for you"*).

Governments and agencies are working hard to develop policies and procedures to contain COVID-19. While encouraged by this, we must remember that God is sovereign, Colossians 1:17 (*"And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together"*). It is the assurance in the sovereignty of God that gives a powerful Gospel witness, Matthew 5:16 (*"let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"*).

LBC, it's members and attendees are encouraged to not have a spirit of panic or fear, but to be still before the Lord. This applies not only to our own lives and our interactions with one another, but also to online social media use. We wish to discourage using social media to spread fear and misinformation, instead we aim to use social media to bring the message of Gospel hope in such trying times. We encourage you to know with conviction that Jesus is Lord of Lords and sovereign overall. To respond to the control of COVID-19 in the assurance of Salvation in Jesus. To recognise that even in these difficult and trying days, while abiding by our government advice and policies, we seek the Glory of our Heavenly Father.

### **WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?**

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. It is a common virus that has developed a particular new strain. Symptoms include but are not limited to the following:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

It is possible to have these symptoms and yet not have COVID-19, this is due to symptoms being similar to the common flu. Specifically, at risk are those who work in the medical profession, those who are older in age and those with pre-existing medical conditions. The virus is likely spread by cough droplets and therefore, close proximity to an infected individual can increase the likelihood of spreading the virus.

### **TREATMENT:**

There is currently no treatment for Coronavirus. Antibiotics do not help against viruses. The aim of any treatment is to relieve symptoms as the body fights the illness. If you believe you have coronavirus the NHS advice is to:

- Self-isolate for 7 days if you have any of the symptoms (cough, high temperature, shortness of breath)

### **HYGIENE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS**

- It is recommended that you wash your hands often, spending at least 20 seconds washing with hot water and soap. Normal soap can be used. There is no need to use alcohol gels/wipes, however, they can be used if hot water and soap are unavailable. Why not use this time to pray the Lord's prayer or to memorise scripture?
- It is recommended that you cough or sneeze into a tissue, then dispose of the tissue immediately.
- Clean all hard surfaces often, using hot water and soap.

For more information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) you can visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

### **CHURCH RESPONSE:**

The church will operate a levelled response, based on advice from Public Health England (PHE) and government policy. The leadership of LBC will then make the decision, following this will inform the church and ministries affected, this will be done by either email or phone call. We have also implemented an initial £500 fund to help resource the impact of the virus.

It may become appropriate to implement a dedicated team to tackle the impact of the virus on the church. If this decision is taken, the leadership will put together an appropriate action team and inform the church.

---

#### LEVEL 0 – No Concern

No change to church activities.

#### LEVEL 1 – Personal Impact

Changes to how we operate, with minimal impact on the ministry of LBC. The church will encourage increased cleanliness and personal hygiene. The following will be implemented:

- Stop handshaking and reduce hugs/kisses
- Church attendees will be encouraged to wash their hands before journeying and upon arrival to church.
- All church crockery will be used once only, then washed with the dishwasher (training will be provided).
- Disposable communion cups will be used OR communion will operate in a differing manner, while still keeping the principle of communion intact.
- All hard surfaces will be regularly cleaned – the whole church membership will be asked to help with this.

#### LEVEL 2 – Ministry Impact

All additional services will be affected.

- Fellowship meals, doctrine series, prayer meetings, Cameo, house groups and evening communion will be cancelled.
- Non-essential meetings will be cancelled and use of email/phone will be encouraged.
- If there is no urgent need to be in the church building, members will be encouraged not to be in the building during the week.
- Reduction in LIFT services – moving to the aiding of the most acute needs only.
- Pastoral visits will be reduced to those in greatest need (sick, elderly, isolated). The leadership will endeavour to care for the majority of the church via phone or digital means.
- All external bookings (whether regular or one off) will be cancelled.

#### LEVEL 3 – Whole Church Impact

- All ministries but Sunday morning service will be cancelled.
- Sunday morning service will be of reduced length.
- Anyone within the case definition (older in age or with medical needs) will be discouraged from attending.
- Pastoral care is given by the whole church, however, only the Leadership will be permitted to do official visitation.

#### LEVEL 4 – Temporary Closure

The church building will be closed, and all ministries will cease for a period of time determined by the church leadership. A leader will be appointed to check on the building and its security, no other person will be permitted entry into the building.

- The church will be run entirely by phone call, email and digital outputs (such as website, Facebook etc.) Weekly sermons will be posted via video on the church website.

#### **TRAVEL TO/FROM INFECTED AREAS:**

Guidance for LBC staff and volunteers having travelled from or through an area identified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as having local transmission of Coronavirus, whether on holiday or business:

- The individual will phone/email LBC Leadership to determine whether they may or may not enter the church or return to LBC activities.
- Staff may be able to work from home for a period as indicated by the latest quarantine rules.
- No third parties, contractors or visitors who having been identified as having travelled from or through an affected area within the last 30 days will not be allowed to visit or partake in any LBC activities before an agreed period has elapsed from the time of their return from an affected area.