



followers of Jesus **seeking to glorify God**

2114-18 Street, Coaldale, Alberta T1M 1G2 phone: (403) 345-3636 fax (403) 345-3638
email: office@coaldalembchurch.com web: www.coaldalembchurch.com

Greetings to each of you from the Leadership Board of Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church. We hope you are doing as well as possible given the uncertainty that we face at this very unique time.

As you are aware, the risk posed by the COVID-19 virus is currently low in southern Alberta. The situation changes very rapidly and we recognize that as a church, we need to respond wisely. In alignment with recommendations and stipulations from Alberta Health, the Leadership Board has made the difficult decision to cancel Sunday school, Sunday services and mid-week programs until further notice.

We expect that this is both expected and disappointing to you. You are not alone in that. We and our pastors will strive to connect with you in various ways to reduce isolation that you may feel. Please also reach out to each other and to others with kindness and compassion during this challenging period of time.

Please follow protocols outlined by Alberta Health. These are available at <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>. This site includes very helpful information, including a self-assessment tool to determine how to respond in different situations.

We realize that this is a challenging time in many ways, including financially. Coaldale MB Church also has financial obligations which need to be met. Our treasurers have confirmed that they have set up and tested the ability to send money via e-tsf using finance@coaldalembchurch.com.

The church office will remain open during regular hours. Feel free to stop by if you have no symptoms and are not required to self-isolate due to recent travel.

Your feedback and suggestions are welcome. Please also let us know if you have specific needs or concerns that we or others at CMBC may be able to assist with.

May God's grace sustain us, both individually and as a community.

In His grace...

Rita Halma for our entire **Leadership** Board: Pastor Gary Burke, Alma Siemens, Ryan Bartel, Justin Reimer and myself



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Hello Coaldale MB Church family

In response to the latest guidelines set by the provincial government regarding groups meeting and the decision of the Leadership Board to suspend all larger group meetings until further notice we are working to rethink ministry during this time. We collaborated with the Leadership Board in the process of the decision being made.

This is not a decision made out of fear. This is an act of faith that it is the right thing to do at this time. We could have requested that those most vulnerable refrain from attending but this seemed at odds with our calling to care for the least of these. And we may still have exceeded the 50 people limit.

It is an act of faith to submit to our governing authorities. At a time when churches are often battling against the government, and it seems the opposite is true, we are choosing to submit to and partner with them on their plan to limit exposure and risk of COVID 19.

This is an act of faith to actively care for those most at risk. Ponder this for a moment. This is much bigger than only protecting people from a virus. The anxiety and fear people are feeling is significant. Loneliness was already widespread in our society prior to this pandemic. We are actively looking for opportunities to be the church, which as we know is not a building, nor is it defined by a particular meeting or way of meeting. The church is all those who genuinely follow Jesus and seek to glorify him in everything, including humbly loving and serving the most vulnerable.

This is also an act of faith that those who regularly attend will not abandon faith or the pursuit of maturity in Christ individually and together. This is our biggest fear. We are concerned that some will be deceived into focusing only, or primarily on, the physical world and neglect the spiritual personally, or in our families, or with those around us. This is certainly not a time to cease pursuing God or to stop encouraging one another in the faith. We feel a great responsibility to resource individuals, families and small groups toward this end. This is an act of faith that Jesus will build his church as he said. Further, this is an opportunity to partner with him in doing that differently than we have been or possibly then we have ever done. Might God answer some of our, and others, deepest prayers and longings through this? In faith, we think so.

Let us pray and act in faith together for God's glory.

Some practicalities are these.

The church office will be open regular hours, and more if necessary. We are here to listen, coordinate, resource, and to serve however we can. Don't hesitate to contact us.



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We are actively exploring with the Coaldale Town office and others where we can meet needs and serve our community together. We encourage everyone to prayerfully ask and explore opportunities around you.

We will utilize technology to achieve our ministry direction. We will be working to care for and communicate with people in our body and community. This will include calling every family, sending regular (at least weekly) updates and devotionals via video and/or text through Facebook or email. We encourage everyone; individuals, small groups and families to be intentional in worship, prayer, study, fellowship and service. Every person, every family member can grow in Christ and we want to work towards this with you.

Together we are his body.

Grace, peace and joy,

For the office staff,
Gary Burke
Lead Pastor
Coaldale MB Church
(403) 345-3636