



PASTORAL NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

DR. EMMANUEL OSEI

Dear Friends,

Christian greetings.

On Monday evening, our Prime Minister announced a three-week nationwide lockdown to prevent the further spread of coronavirus in the UK. The British public have been ordered to stay at home, and are only permitted to leave "for food, health reasons or to do essential work".

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have always expected the fires of persecution to prevent us from meeting together in the last days. It may never have crossed our minds that a virus would cause us to close our church doors. Yet a quarter of the world's population is now living under some form of lockdown, as the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 globally has passed 525,000, with more than 23,000 deaths.

On Tuesday morning I issued a video update, requesting that members adhere to government guidelines and pause all face-to-face small group meetings for the duration of the lockdown:

<https://youtu.be/vjSBadQWnlQ>

Brothers and Sisters, the situation is dire. At the time of writing, the UK has at least 11,500 recorded coronavirus cases and 578 deaths. A number of our church members have been hospitalised as a result of contracting COVID-19, with many more self-isolating and convalescing at home.

Added to this, a number of our members with serious underlying health conditions will have received a letter from the NHS this week, strongly advising them to avoid any face-to-face contact with others for a period of at least 12 weeks.

It is therefore imperative that we all do our part to slow the spread of the infection by minimising our day-to-day contact with other people.

I want to express my gratitude to every member of our Conference for your cooperation during this unprecedented crisis. In particular, the many key workers within our churches, whose jobs in health & social care, education, public safety & national security, food & pharmacy, transport and infrastructure have put them on the front line. We thank you for your dedication and commitment.

My appreciation also goes out to our presenters and staff at Adventist Radio London who are ensuring that uplifting programmes continue to be transmitted to bless our listeners. Many have called saying they feel closely connected as a result.

In addition, our Pastors, Elders and church technical teams are to be commended. Their hard work is ensuring that church members are still able to pray and worship together via livestreaming, teleconferencing and social media. Far from limiting our reach, technology has enabled thousands of people to join our worship services from all over the world.

DEPARTMENTS

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TREASURER

ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

CHURCH PLANTING & GROWTH

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PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

SABBATH SCHOOL

STEWARDSHIP

TEENS

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

YOUTH

Phone calls, text messages, Skype, Zoom and WhatsApp, are enabling pastoral teams to maintain social interaction and check on the wellbeing of church members.

And although the Conference Office is now closed, our Directors, Coordinators and support staff are also working hard to produce and share resources to encourage and support you and your ministry throughout the lockdown period.

SEC Treasury

A number of members have expressed concern about the giving of tithes and offerings during the lockdown period. Here are six ways of giving and brief notes:

- **On-line giving** – via SEC website and click DONATE button
 - **Bank transfer** – Please quote your Gift Aid number, if any as the bank transaction reference
 - **Telephone** – Available between Monday to Thursday from 9:30am to 4:30pm
 - **Cheques** – Please issue cheques to South England Conference and write your gift aid number & church name at the back of the cheque
 - **Text giving** – Local offerings only
 - **Mobicash/mobile app** – As of March 2020, only available for paying SEC and tithe. Will accept local offerings soon
- Full details are available in the attached guide to **Electronic Giving**. Please share the guide and the video in the link below, so that all your members are aware of the options available to them:
- <https://youtu.be/MY6iWvsM8Nk>

SEC Communication & Media**SEC Sabbath Service Livestream**

While church services are suspended, we will be streaming a live message each Sabbath. Please tune in at 9.45am on Sabbath morning for Hope Sabbath School Class, followed by a live Worship Service at 11am:

<https://secmedia.org>

SEC Church Live Streams & Archives

A number of churches are also streaming their own Sabbath services and mid-week prayer meetings; and many more have previous sermons available to watch again. Visit the SEC website for an updated list:

<https://sec.adventist.uk/departments/media/live-streaming-media-channels>

SEC Health Ministries**COVID-19 Update**

As we are now in a tighter lockdown situation than last week, attached is some great advice on how to best manage this time of quarantine.

Sharon Platt-McDonald and I also collaborated on a Hope Channel show about 'Boosting Immunity', which is especially important at a time like this:

<http://hopetv.org.uk/nc/programmes/embed/ml/-/boosting-immunity>

Please make the most of the time you can spend outside to get some exercise, if you are able; as we do not know whether this option will be taken away in the future. Finally, to those who are able, I'm encouraging you to sign up to the NHS Volunteering Helpline:

<https://www.goodsamapp.org/nhs>

If accepted, this will allow you to work with your local church and other organisations, to support the vulnerable.

Wishing you health & peace for the Sabbath and week to come.

Dr Chidi

SEC Health Ministries Director

Advice For Local Churches

Please bookmark the following link and check back regularly for updated advice and guidance for local churches:

<https://adventist.uk/news/article/go/2020-03-25/daily-advice-on-covid-19-coronavirus-for-local-churches>

Cornerstone Counselling Service (CCS)

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, CCS have switched to online counselling through Zoom, Skype, FaceTime and other mediums. Telephone counselling is still available. Counsellors and trained listeners are available from 8am to midnight. Email us at connect@ccscounselling.org.uk; call us on 0207 7238050; or visit our website to chat online and for COVID-19 emotional support resources:

www.ccscounselling.org.uk

Urgently Needed!!

Additional trained listeners and counsellors to support isolated and lonely members of society who might be affected by social distancing, self-isolation and shielding regulations. Contact Thembie Mapingire on connect@ccscounselling.org.uk or 07861259449.

Adventist Discovery Centre**Building Online Communities**

It is a blessing that we have access to Zoom and local churches' online services but many people do not. Attached are the three flyers that the ADC will be promoting on a rotation basis on social media. We encourage you to share these on your local church's websites, social media pages, with friends and community members within your address book and anyone you believe would benefit from staying connected with the Word. Visit the ADC website for more:

www.discoveronline.org.uk

Stanborough Press Update**LifeSource Online Shop**

The newly launched online shop is still operating, and processing orders as usual. Dried and tinned food products are available for purchase, as well as books and activities to help keep children occupied while off school. In addition, there's a wide selection of games for the whole family, suitable for playing on Sabbaths. Visit: www.lifesourcebookshop.co.uk

You can also place your order with the Stanborough Press on 01476 591700.

LifeSource Bookshop, Watford: Still Open!

Those living in the environs of the Watford shop might be interested to know that it is now able to open for the following hours:

Tuesdays: 12.30-5pm

Fridays: 10am-2pm

We'd still advise that you check before visiting, as things are changing so rapidly. Call ahead on 01923 893461.

SEC Family Ministries

It has become increasingly clear that the way we experience community and fellowship will be very different for the next few weeks. This certainly presents very serious challenges for many, especially for families with little children. However, it also presents some awesome ministry opportunities. Please see the attached resources for inspiration.

SEC Teens Ministries**Dealing with Boredom While Quarantined**

SEC Teens Director, Pastor Juan Carlos Patrick, has created some posters which can be shared with young people who are experiencing boredom at home, and looking for inspiration. Tips include:

- 8 things you can do to keep yourself active while staying at home
- The One Day at a Time Daily Organiser
- 7 things you can do to keep yourself spiritually active

SEC Pathfinders & Adventurers**Earn Honours & Awards at Home****Starts Friday 27 March**

Over the next few weeks we will be posting online sessions of Pathfinder Honours and Adventurer Awards for young people to follow and complete during the lockdown. Please see the attached letter for details. A link will also be posted on the website: secpathfinders.com

SEC Church Growth**How to Be the Church While Your Church Building is Closed**

Please find attached an excellent resource entitled, 'If your Church Closes' which offers simple ideas and options for mission and ministry in circumstances where public gathering is not feasible.

SEC Women's Ministry**Love in Action**

Many people within our churches and the community at large have been marginalised, forgotten, and isolated as a result of their unmet needs for care. Please read the details attached to see how SEC Women's Ministries are seeking to serve these vulnerable members of our community during and beyond this time of crisis.

Adventist Radio London**ARL Schedule: Sabbath 28 March**

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, ARL have continued to 'share the hope' with a growing listenership. This Sabbath's schedule is attached.

Friends of ARL Appeal

Adventist Radio London would like to thank all our 'Friends' who have pledged to support our radio ministry through your generous donations.

To further assist you in your giving, we are pleased to announce that our on-line giving facility is now up and running.

To set up your gift details please visit:

<https://adventistradio.london/become-a-friend>

Every gift is thankfully received and goes towards helping to keep this radio ministry live on air as we broadcast the gospel of Jesus to London and beyond.

ARL Mission Offering Day

Although churches will not meet on 4 April, please continue to set aside contributions for this very important ministry.

SEC Youth Week of Prayer**Concludes Sabbath 28 March**

Many of our churches have been using technology creatively this week to ensure that our young people were still able to meet virtually for prayer and upliftment despite the lockdown.

Readings and additional resources are available from:

<https://youth.adventist.org/Resources/Week-of-Prayer>

And we encourage you all to join SEC Youth Director, Pastor Anthony Fuller, and his team for the last in their series of interactive discussions for the week, at 8pm on Friday on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/secyouthmin>

SEC Women's Ministries**Inspirational Power Hour Launch****Sunday 29 March (10am-11am)**

Please join us for an hour of inspiration, education and testimonials; featuring Nutritional Therapist and Health Coach, Sonya Barnes Locker.

Zoom Meeting ID: 457 686 7023

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4576867023>

ADRA-UK Annual Appeal**29 March - 31 August**

This weekend is the start of the 2020 ADRA Appeal, which has been extended until the end of August in light of ongoing challenges. Please note that there will be no door-to-door collection this year (this includes front-facing fundraising initiatives such as collecting outside train stations or shops).

SEC Children's Ministries**International Women's Day Writing Competition****Deadline for entries: Monday 30 March**

Girls from across the SEC are invited to share their thoughts on how their favourite female Bible character might influence non-Christian women in today's world to want to get to know Christ. Details are attached. A small prize will be awarded to the strongest entries from each SEC area.

SEC Prayer Ministries Retreat**Friday 31 July - Sunday 2 August**

Kindly promote the SEC Prayer Ministries Retreat. The theme is 'Abiding In His Presence' and the keynote speaker will be Pastor Samuel Telemaque.

Church Without Walls Annual Retreat**Friday 31 July - Sunday 2 August**

This Seventh-day Adventist online prayer ministry has its annual retreat coming up, at Kents Hill Park Training & Conference Centre, in Milton Keynes. Please call 07883 038 662 or 07733 364 911 for additional information.

If you would like to join us online, the dial in number is 0330 390 2113 and the access code is 206594#.

SEC Family Ministries**Couples Retreat****Friday 30 October - Sunday 1 November**

Featuring special guest speakers, Dr Stephanie Knight & Dr Charles Wesley Knight. Spaces are limited so book yours now - you won't want to miss this! Full details and an application form are available on the SEC website:

<https://sec.adventist.uk/events/event/em/2020-10-30-couples-retreat>

Newbold Diversity Lecture Series**Returns this Autumn**

Many people were looking forward to hearing from Amanda Mukwashi, the Chief Executive of Christian Aid, at the April Diversity lecture. We are hoping that she will be able to join us in November instead. Please look out for news of that and the other lectures for the Autumn semester of the 2020-21 academic year over the coming months.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Session 2020**Tentative Dates: 20-25 May 2021**

Please note that the rescheduled GC Session event is likely to be much smaller, without the usual exhibitions; and will probably be open only to delegates and invitees.

Job Vacancies**Newbold School****Permanent Class Teacher (Years 5 & 6)**

For details please contact

headteacher@newboldschool.co.uk

Stanborough School**Part Time Computer Science Teacher****Boarding School Assistant Dean for Girls****Boarding School Assistant Dean for Boys**

Interested applicants please contact the P.A. to the Head Teacher for an application pack; email kgittens@spsch.org or call 01923 673268.

Prayer Focus

As serious as the coronavirus is, and it is serious, there is something else that is deadlier—fear. Fear, anxiety, and worry impact our immune systems, strangle our joy, and rob us of hope. How can we be kept from being consumed by worry and anxiety?

What can help us from being overcome by crippling fear?

Let us pray that the peace of God, that surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and mind in Christ Jesus.

1. Pray that God will make something good come out of this pandemic to His glory.
2. Pray that this pandemic will be an opportunity for the church to be a light to the world.
3. Pray that with the increasing demand for food and products, God will supply all our needs.
4. Let us Pray for the bereaved, self isolating and those in hospital.
5. Let us pray for the Key Workers and Medical staff who have been placed in harms way to help us to fight the Corona Virus.

Linda Mukwada

SEC Prayer Ministries Coordinator

I encourage you all to join the SEC Prayer Line for a Spirit filled hour of prayer every morning at 6am-7am on 0330 9981259; access code 355114#

Warmest regards,



Dr Emmanuel Osei

President

South England Conference