

AN OPEN LETTER TO CANADIAN BAPTISTS

Follow the ark, for we have never been this way before
Joshua 3:4

This is a time of fear and uncertainty, never before experienced within our lifetime. An unprecedented time for most of us, yes, but not for the Church. While for most Canadians this may be our first experience with a pandemic, as the Church, we've been through this — and worse — before. God has always led us through. The Lord is faithful to do it again.

When the people of Israel stood on the banks of the Jordan, the future was nothing if not uncertain. But what did God ask of them? Follow the Ark of the Covenant — the symbol of God's eternal promise — and proceed with confidence. God will go before us.

We leaders of the Canadian Baptist family are standing alongside you, your families, churches and local communities. Like you, our lives and families have been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it brings. You reached out to us for guidance, insight and hope. You asked us how to care for those at risk, both locally and globally. Hard questions about the viability of our churches have been put before us. Know that we hear you and are doing everything possible to support you through this time.

Recently we met (virtually) to share and pray for each other's churches, pastors, missionaries and organizations. We committed to praying for the whole Canadian Baptist family, and to making ourselves available to offer guidance and direction. Now, we call you to join us in prayer and to continue living generous, hope-filled lives even during this disruptive and difficult time.

This crisis may be the greatest challenge we will ever face as Canadian Baptists, but it may also be our defining moment. How we come together and mobilize as God's people in the midst of this current crisis may set the course for the future of our denomination. Now is the time to proceed with the shared confidence that comes from knowing God goes before us and his mercies never fail.

Today, we invite you to join us in three acts of faithful discipleship:

Stand united in worship and intercession

Pray fervently for our Canadian Baptist family and all our ministries, including churches, camps, women's groups, schools, senior's homes and mission initiatives both local and global. As Canadian Baptists, we affirm his sovereign lordship over all creation and choose to place our total trust in him alone for all the activities we undertake.

Continue to support your church

Many churches will encounter dire consequences without the ongoing financial support of their regular attendees. Find out how to continue giving your tithes and offerings even when church services are suspended.

Care for the most vulnerable

Who are the elderly and recent refugees in your local community? Who are the poor and marginalized in our world who are especially vulnerable during this pandemic? Ask how you can continue to safely minister to those in greatest need.

While the world may have ground to a halt, we need you to be active in praying, giving and caring. None of us have experienced this before, but as his Church, may we continue to live out the Easter hope of Christ's resurrection and new life.

Shalom,



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