

Covid-19 Response June 13 2020

(transcript of video at <https://fbcdrumheller.com/covid-19-update>)

Hello FBC Family;

Since March 15th we have been unable to physically meet together here at the church, due of course to the restrictions that are presented to us to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19.

As most of you are aware, yesterday June 12th the province of Alberta moved to Stage 2 of the reopening of our economy. With this move to stage 2, other business sectors were allowed to open and some restrictions that were in place for stage 1 have been modified.

With this, there of course is a bit of excitement surrounding it, especially for us as a church: Can we come back to the building for a Sunday service? Can we start meeting together again physically? What does this really all mean? Last week I even hinted at a possible return to our building for Father's day, June 21.

As much as we would love to be together on a Sunday morning, realistically this is still unfortunately not able to happen.

As you can imagine, the Elder Board and I have talked about this a lot. It has occupied a lot of my own prayers and thoughts, studying through what the ramifications are for all of this. We, as Elder Board and Lead Pastor have come to the conclusion that Sunday morning will be still quite challenging for us on a number of fronts.

Firstly, there are still a number of restrictions set out for places of worship by the Government and Provincial Health services. These restrictions still include the 2 metre distances, no singing, no children's ministry, no nursery. Yes, we can have 50 people indoors, but the facility needs to be able to adhere to all of the other restrictions that are set in place.

With that idea, that is the second reason for making the decision to not have a Sunday service together. Our building size and layout puts even more constraints on us to be able to meet together.

Thirdly, we would like to continue to provide an online presence in the form of video and singing worship songs. These, due to our current technology, would be extremely difficult if not impossible to be able to do while also having people in the building. We are working hard to upgrade things on this front, but that will take some time still.

And finally, the board and I really sense that, with our church dynamic as a loving, caring, physically warm body of believers, having something with these tight constraints still will be more frustrating than a blessing.

We do want to make it very clear that this decision of not opening up our Sunday morning services was not made easily. This is not made because we don't want to meet together. On the contrary we do desire to meet together, but just safely, respectfully and meaningfully.

So with that we do want to have an opportunity still to have an available time where we can meet physically. We have decided to open up the church for a Wednesday evening devotional and prayer time starting June 24 at 7 pm. This will be open to anyone, we would still have to adhere to all the present restrictions and more information will be given on that as we move closer to that date. But we believe that this will be not only safe, able to be done well, but also beneficial for the physical connection that we so long to provide.

This past week I read some input from others as to the move to stage 2. I was touched by what was said by Calgary's Arts Commons president Alex Sarian. Arts Commons is a multi-venue arts centre in downtown Calgary, and they unfortunately have decided not to reopen due to many of the same restrictions placed on places of worship, like no signing. He said the following: "The last thing we want, both as an institution and as a sector, is for a second wave to be traced back to an artistic gathering, ... That would be devastating."

And I feel we as believers in Christ can echo this sentiment. Recent history unfortunately has not been our side with this pandemic. A number of outbreaks, not just in Canada but around the world, can be traced back to places of worship.

For the safety of all, we will continue as church leaders to be wise, to be thoughtful, to be respectful but most of all to be safe. We do not want to have a second wave be traced back to a church gathering.

We want to thank you for your continued prayers and support.

If you have any questions, please connect with any one of our Elder Board members or myself.

In appreciation;

Michael Fletcher
Lead Pastor
Fellowship Baptist Church