



PASTORAL NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

DR. EMMANUEL OSEI

Dear Friends,

Christian greetings.

While front line workers continue to risk their own health and well-being to keep essential services going and to attend to the sick and vulnerable; most of us will have been consigned to working from home. Some may even have been laid off or let go, as businesses and organisations begin to experience the financial impact of the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

UK government ministers have warned it is unlikely that the lockdown will be lifted soon: My brothers and sisters, we are here for the long haul.

In light of this, we have had to make some difficult decisions, which I shared with you in my most recent video update:

<https://youtu.be/AluvTFNv2uo>

These decisions have not been taken lightly but are the result of much prayer and consultation. Our key priorities are to:

1. Ensure the safety and ongoing pastoral care of our members, and
2. Safeguard the financial position of the South England Conference in the short and longer term.

For the months of March, April and May, the government is making a Job Retention grant available for all organisations, including charities. The government will pay 80% or up to £2,500 towards workers' salaries. A worker benefitting from this scheme is said to be on furlough.

Please visit the website below for full details of what can and cannot be done while on furlough:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#when-your-employees-are-on-furlough>

Although we have missed the March date, we are hoping to benefit from the grant during April and May. We have held discussions with our schools, our Directors, our Area Coordinators and all our pastors concerning this matter; and have taken the decision to furlough the following staff:

- All support staff and some teaching staff at our three conference primary schools: Hyland House, Fletewood and Newbold.
- All support staff at our Conference office with the exception of Media, Treasury, Secretariat and Presidential departments.
- All SEC directors with the exception of Pr Sam Davies (Communications), Pr Samuel Ouadjo (Ministerial Secretary), Pr Michael Hamilton (Radio), Mrs Thembie Mapingire (Counselling) & Dr Chidi Ngwaba (Health).
- Most interns and licensed ministers, and some ordained ministers in each area.

I am grateful to all our staff and workers for sharing their wisdom in discussing this issue.

We have looked at each Conference area, with the help of our Area Coordinators, to ensure that a team of Pastors will continue to be available to take care of the pastoral needs of our members over the next two months. We have also begun consulting with our Elders in each area to answer questions

DEPARTMENTS

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COMMUNITY SERVICES

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PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

SABBATH SCHOOL

STEWARDSHIP

TEENS

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

YOUTH

and empower them to work alongside their Pastors. In taking these steps we are seeking to balance the pastoral care of our members and the survival of our Conference when this pandemic has passed, by securing our cash flow and preserving our Conference and its employees in the short term and the long term. We are living in unprecedented times, and we are soliciting your prayers and support as we go through this difficult period.

SEC Treasury

Please find attached once more a letter from our Treasurer, Sister Candy Layson, which includes updates on the various methods available to make it easier for church members to return their tithe and offerings while churches are closed. Please share the letter, along with the video link below:

<https://youtu.be/MY6iWvsM8Nk>

Stewardship

Churches Set for Mobile App Giving

All SEC churches are now included on the merchant list of the MobiCash app, which members and donors can download through the Android or Apple app stores, or by scanning the SEC QR Code, which is attached along with a handy User Guide.

SEC Communication & Media

SEC Sabbath Service Livestream

Please join us on YouTube, Facebook or the SECmedia website each Sabbath at 9.45am:

<https://secmedia.org>

SEC Church Live Streams

Attached is a guide to using livestreaming services like Zoom safely.

You can visit the SEC website for a list of churches with sermon archives, and/or their own livestreamed services:

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

60 SEC News

A new episode is released each Friday:

<https://youtu.be/gES1BdYvVOA>

SEC COMMUNICATOR Magazine

The new issue is available now. This quarter focuses on the subject of 'Climate Change':

<https://seccommunicator.com>

SEC Health Ministries

I hope and pray that you and your loved ones are well - This is no longer just a phrase, as many of us will have lost loved ones in the last seven days. This virus is certainly starting to hit home to many of us, and when we see the Prime Minister currently being treated in the Intensive Care Unit, we realise that nobody is beyond the reach of this lethal illness. We continue to put the PM and all those suffering right now into The Lord's hands.

Despite the worry, loss, and sadness, there have been some glimmers of light at the end of the tunnel. In the UK, as in many other countries, right now, the rate of increase of cases of Covid-19 and deaths, is decreasing. The numbers are still rising, but they are rising at a slower rate. This is leading many epidemiologists to suggest that Britain is reaching the peak of new cases. It is suggested that in the next 10 days, we may start to see a decline in cases. So, there is room for some cautious optimism.

As Churchill said after the Battle of El Alamein in 1942: *"This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."*

So, we need to continue with social distancing and, if necessary, social isolation. But we will get through this, the end is coming.

As we continue in this lockdown situation, let's do everything we can to keep our immune system working at its very best. We may still get the virus. But the stronger the immune system, the better prepared our bodies will be. Remember:

- **Exercise Daily:** make the most of the time outside, especially if the weather is nice. Some have been confused and think that the government has forbidden us to go outside at all. We are allowed to go out to exercise every day.
 - **Top up your vitamin D3:** if you can't get enough sun, take a supplement.
 - **Berries, greens, nuts, seeds, and beans:** Don't let a day go by without having a portion of each.
 - **Spice up your life with:** Turmeric, black pepper, ginger, cinnamon. Of course, don't forget your garlic, onions, lemon & lime.
 - **Lower sugar intake:** I know it's difficult for some of us but try to avoid refined/concentrated sugar.
 - **Stay very well hydrated**
- Lastly, I mentioned the book 'How to stop worrying, and start Living' last week. May I recommend a daily action for the next seven days:
- **Every day do something nice for someone else** - It's one of the quickest ways to drive out bitterness, stress, and anxiety. It's impossible for the brain to hold two separate thoughts at the same time. If you don't believe me, try thinking of Big Ben and what you plan to do tomorrow.

As a doctor who has gone back to doing A&E shifts in my spare time, I can guarantee that you have no time to think about your problems when faced with the suffering of others.

And remember: *"As a man thinks, so is he..."* (Proverbs 23:7).

Wishing you all a Peaceful Sabbath

God bless us all,

Dr Chidi

SEC Health Ministries Director

Cornerstone Counselling Service (CCS)

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 emotional support resources: www.ccscounselling.org.uk

Stanborough Press

Life Source Online Shop

To place your order with the Stanborough Press call: 01476 591700 (Mon-Thu); email: sales@stanboroughpress.org.uk; or visit: www.lifeforcebookshop.co.uk

Watford Bookshop: Opening Hours

Although it will be closed on Good Friday, the shop reopens as usual next week Tuesday 14 April from 12.30-5pm, and on Friday 17 April from 10am-2pm. Call ahead if there are changes to government advice (01923 893461).

Children's Ministries

Children's Corner: Easter Story Adaptation Sabbath 11 April (11am)

Please encourage the children and families in your congregation to join us for this special programme which will be aired around 11am during the SEC Sabbath livestream. Full details in the attached letter, along with an activity workbook on Steps to Christ.

Pathfinders & Adventurers

Earn Honours & Awards at Home

Pathfinder Honours and Adventurer Awards are available for young people to follow and complete online. Visit: secpathfinders.com

Youth Ministries

SEC Youth Ministries are seeking content creators, speakers, videographers, photographers, presenters, preachers, entertainers, musicians, writers and entrepreneurs, to collaborate with and support in taking ministry and discipleship to the next level. Sign up at: youthministries.co.uk

YMTV YouTube Channel

Includes highlights from Youth Week of Prayer 2020:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR6HpNJQzsHnCpLcBmeJT1g?view_as=subscriber

Women's Ministries Zoom Call

Sunday 12 April (10am-11am)

See the attached poster for full details.

Possibilities Ministry

He's got the whole world in His hands!

We are in a time of uncertainty with many changes that are very challenging and difficult for all, not least families living with children that are disabled.

Please see some useful links to assist you in this time of ambiguity:

- How to cope with a child with disability during covid-19: [click here](#)
- COVID-19 Support and Guidance from the Council for Disabled Children: [click here](#)

BSL Interpreted Sabbath Sermon

Please see the attached notice for details.

Possibilities Zoom Support Group**Starts Tuesday 14 April (10am-11am)**

To help support parents, guardians, carers and people living with life limiting illnesses, SEC Possibilities Ministries has now created a support group that will be accessible on Zoom, commencing next Tuesday.

ADRA-UK**COVID-19 Update**

In collaboration with the TED and in partnership with Community Services Directors, Health Ministries and Union representatives, ADRA is leading on the humanitarian work of COVID-19 in the UK. Through our I AM Urban initiative; we are supporting 20 community hubs in the UK to make a real difference in their localities at this time. The churches who we are aware are operative at this time in the SEC are Brixton, Edmonton, Hanwell, Holloway, Ipswich, Plymouth, Stanborough Park, Stratford, Swindon and Tottenham West Green Road. We are anticipating that Balham and Willesden will be on board in the next month.

These community hubs are working with the elderly, rough sleepers, young people in care, key workers and people with long-term health conditions. They are also working in partnership with other civil society organisations, charities and faith-based organisations.

Since the onset of COVID-19, ADRA has worked on several levels, strategically, internationally and nationally. ADRA-UK is working with its partners in Europe and globally to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable who are affected by the onset of the contagion. Our Programmes Team continues to work with our partners in our international development projects throughout the world.

COVID-19 Emergency Appeal

We have today, launched a COVID-19 Emergency Appeal and sent this to our donors, ADRA Agents etc. Please encourage your church members to support this Appeal at this time. Each pastor should have received a letter with information to share with their congregations. We have also included virtual fundraising ideas to assist people who wish to raise income during the lockdown.

Full details are available online at:

https://adrauk.org/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=view_in_browser&action=view&ata=WzMsImlyMDUyNDZmYjgwZCIsMCwwLDAsMv0

For further information regarding the appeal, please contact Cathy Boldeau at: cboldeau@adra.org.uk / urban@adra.org.uk

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 is the third flyer that the ADC will be promoting on a rotation basis on social media. We encourage you to share it 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

Adventist Radio London**Friends of ARL Appeal**

Adventist Radio London are celebrating two years of 'sharing the hope' with their growing listenership!

Those of you who are enjoying our programming will be pleased to know 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.

Prayer Focus**Our God is a Sequential God**

In nature we can find many wonderful examples of the good news of God. Here we are, at the beginning of spring. Some trees are showing no form of life yet, while others are budding and still others have young leaves of varying shades and colours breaking through. Some trees are balls of pastel coloured blossoms while bushes around them are evergreen foliage of fragrant fern.

When all of this is considered one can truly praise the Lord. Do you know that He is a sequential God? He does not allow all the trees and bushes to come out in their green finery all at once. He orchestrates it so that some come out really early and some come out later. The blossoming shrubs and trees will transform into a multicoloured panorama of beauty, a pleasure to behold. As we consider this new beginning, let us cast our minds to what is happening right now.

Our God is a sequential God. In His love and mercy, He has not permitted COVID-19 to attack the whole world at once. The disease has spread in stages, allowing some countries to learn from others who are ahead of them. Some have gotten it under relative control whilst others are still waiting for their peak to occur.

God in His wisdom has not allowed our global community to be swallowed up all at once. The forces of evil and disaster have been held back in their wrath and a world has been sequenced in mercy. The return to normal life in China has given many countries hope that things will eventually get better.

There will be an end. It will be a sequential end. Our Heavenly Father grieves with us at the loss and devastation - the results of sin. In His love and mercy, He has come through as a sequential God. His Redeeming power is as alive today as it ever will be.

So, we pray:

1. Giving thanks to a God of order who is working in sequence to bring about His Divine will.
2. Let us pray that we focus not on the problem but on the promise for Christ said these things would happen, but we must look up for our redemption draweth near.
3. Let us pray for wisdom to discern the working of a sequential God in our personal lives and bear testimony of His amazing power to turn tragedy into triumph.
4. Let us pray for the Countries ahead of us in coping with this disease and that they will be rescued and released from the severity of deaths. And also pray for those countries witnessing the effects and their efforts to deal with their medical emergencies.
5. Let us pray that the Lord keeps us strong in hope, never wavering or denying His power and His working in this troublesome time.
6. Let us pray that we stand firm on the word of the Bible and we are inspired with ways to reach out to a dying world.
7. Let us pray that we commit ourselves daily to our sequential God that we may be grounded and steadfast in our faith and belief in Him.

All members are invited to participate in the 100 Days of Prayer for the world church.

Please visit the dedicated website for details of this GC initiative:

<http://www.revivalandreformation.org/100days>

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

Warmest regards,



Dr Emmanuel Osei
President
South England Conference