



News Update 2 April 2020

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God' (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

How are you and your church, now we are in Lockdown Week 2? The HOPE Together team is all working remotely, keeping in touch with churches across the UK by phone and with Zoom meetings.

Churches are doing an amazing job, supporting their own congregations by phone and with practical support to shop and collect prescriptions etc. The army of volunteers who would normally run toddler groups, lunch clubs, chaplaincies, youth groups and so much more face to face community work, has become an online army of befrienders and supporters.

Although we are in difficult times, it is thrilling to see local churches rise to the challenge, showing the servant heart of Jesus with loving, selfless action.

It is also exciting to find that our online, livestreamed services are attracting far larger virtual congregations than regular meetings. HOPE's mandate is to support the local church to make Jesus known with words and actions. Covid-19 hasn't changed that and, through these regular emails, we aim to resource you to be missional in this season.

We are hearing stories of online church prayer meetings and services being viewed by more than double the number of people who normally attend in person. As your church plans to celebrate Easter – can I encourage you to look outwards to make your Easter livestreamed celebration accessible for those who are not-yet-Christians who will be looking in.

We are still believing that 2020 will be a year of harvest, as people look for lasting hope, now that so much we have relied on in the past has been stripped away. God bless you abundantly in this season

Roy Crowne
HOPE Together's Executive Director



Who will you invite to celebrate Easter?

Judging by the online audiences for livestreamed church services over the past two weeks, we can expect thousands of not-yet-Christians to be looking in on our Easter Sunday celebrations. HOPE Together has prepared a poster to download from our [Easter page](#) to display on church noticeboards and members' windows, with space for you to write the web address for your Easter Sunday livestreamed events. A matching Easter invitation is also available for social media posts – simply add your church's url to the social media post and use the image on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



Give away a Gospel

We are thrilled to see that orders for our gift book ['Who Do You say I Am?'](#) and the new

[Mark's Gospel](#) have continued coming in. We are keen to make it as easy as possible for you to give a gift of a Gospel so, as well as offering Gospels in packs of five which you can buy and post to your friends, we now have [single copies](#) available to order – and we can post the single copies direct to your friend's home address. Visit the [HOPE shop](#) to place your order and give a gift of hope to your friends and family members this Easter.

You can then use the Discover Bible App to read the Bible with friends. Find out more about the Discover Bible App [here](#). @discoverAppDBS.

Hope in Uncertain Times

From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, the HOPE team will be posting short, thought-provoking reflections on social media for you to share with not-yet-Christian friends and family members. Look out for them on our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) stories – they will be posted each day as well as on our [new Easter website page](#).



@HopeTogether

Mission Academy Live – for online youth groups

More than 25 youth leaders have signed up for the 10-session video course [Mission Academy Live](#) so far this year. Sue Jennens, who has been keeping in touch with youth leaders by phone, says, 'One group told me how they are now meeting online, watching the video and then discussing the theme for the session. It is really encouraging to hear how a number of churches are making space for young people during their livestreamed service. Some are also holding a special Youth Service, sharing the videos and discussing the topic online, learning together how they then can share their faith with their peers.'



Social media #GoodSam

'Who is Sam? Tell us who is helping people in your community? Read the original #GoodSam story [here](#).'

This is one of HOPE's social media posts, encouraging people to read the Bible for themselves. Other posts include 'Reasons for Hope' and 'Help bring Hope' offering ideas to encourage and serve people in this unprecedented season. Do share these online posts and tell us the #GoodSam stories from your area.



Who is SAM?



Hope for All

St Germain's Church in Edgbaston are adding copies of the [Hope for All](http://hopeinfo.org.uk) magazine to emergency food hampers that are being distributed to vulnerable folk in their area. The *Hope for All* magazine is also available to share online – visit hopeinfo.org.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Hope for All' website. The background is a close-up of green grass. At the top left is the 'HOPE FOR ALL' logo. A navigation menu at the top right includes 'HOME', 'FEATURES', 'MAGAZINE', 'VIDEOS', 'FEATURES ARCHIVE', 'FIND OUT MORE', and 'SHOP'. The main text reads: 'HOPE for all is a gift from your local church packed with stories to encourage, inform and challenge you.' Below this are three bullet points: '// Watch videos linked to features in the magazine', '// Read features from our archive', and '// Find out more about Christianity'. On the right side, there is a featured magazine cover for 'PRAY!' featuring actor Chris Pratt. The cover includes the text 'CELEBRITY BAPTISMS', 'SEEING ANGELS', 'GENEROSITY PAYING IT FORWARD', and 'AN EASTENDERS LEGACY'.

Alpha follow-up

Just as a normal Easter service might include an invitation to respond to Jesus and to find out more at an Alpha course – your online church service can do the same. One church in Sussex has already heard from an online visitor who said they had never been to the church but would definitely come along when the lockdown ends. Find out more about running Alpha online [here](#).



How can we help?

Do let us know how we can serve you as you make Jesus known with words and action at this time. If you have ideas which we could help you to develop, do let us know. And get in touch to let us know how we can pray for you.

With love and prayers from the HOPE Together team
