

January 2021 Update

The work goes on! Whatever the struggles and setbacks and obstacles, the work goes on! The "second wave" of COVID-19 in Barbados resulted in a limit of only 3 people at church for two Sundays in January. So, as pictured above, myself, our Deacon Jonathan, and a rotation of other brothers met at the church for those four services to livestream for the rest of the congregation. Our government has now relaxed the limit to 10 people, which is still not ideal, of course. But we've put each of our members and regular attendees into a rotation so that everyone can at least attend one service every 2-3 weeks. Right now the restriction is only scheduled to last until January 31, but if there is one thing 2020 has taught us all it surely must be that we don't know what next month will bring (cf. James 4:14). In any case, and whatever may come, we will press on by God's grace!



We rented a public space in the north of the island for an outreach service on Sunday, December 6, 2020.

One danger we see in the midst of this COVID-19 situation is the danger of "drifting" (cf. Hebrews 2:1). Individually, as families, and as a church, there is a danger of regressing into mere "maintenance mode" and merely existing rather than truly living, pursuing the kind of lifestyle that we ought to: seeking to know Christ (cf. Ephesians 3:19, Philippians 3:8...etc.) and to make him

known (cf. Matthew 28:18-20...etc.). In view of the danger of drifting we are really trying to keep our foot on the gas pedal, so to speak, and to do what we can as a church to reach out and continue with the Great Commission as we're able, even as we try to stir up one another to love and good works at an individual and household level also.

To this end, we rented the pavilion along the esplanade in Speightstown, the northernmost urban centre in Barbados, for an outreach service on Sunday, December 6, 2020. Though several from our congregation met in Speightstown a week ahead of time and distributed 300 flyers, it was not well attended, to be honest. Only about 3 people from outside our church came and stayed for the whole service. We will try again at some point, though! And we'll also try similar outreach services in other areas



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of the island. At the very least, the distribution of flyers and the public events will give some exposure to our church and you never know how the Lord may use that in the long run even if there are not obvious short-term results.



During the "original" Reformation, Luther's printed works were tremendously influential in bringing about change. As we all know, books have been a real aid to the work of reformation ever since. Leigh Powell, Chris' father and Pastor Emeritus in Toronto, has recently downsized his library significantly and generously shipped a whole pallet of books to us here in Barbados.

We have given and intend to give some more of these books away to pastors from other churches here in the island, and we've added some to our own church's lending library. We've given some to our up and coming potential-leaders-in-training. We've donated some to the public library system here in Barbados, hoping to get some good material into wider circulation. And there's a bunch we still haven't been able to sort through yet. Please pray with us that God will use these books as little mustard seeds which grow-- as his kingdom-- unsuspectingly, and bear much fruit (cf. Matthew 13:31ff).



On the family front, everyone is doing well. Mel and I (Jon) just celebrated our 10th anniversary and her parents kept our boys for a few nights so we could enjoy an extended "staycation" together, just the two of us. The boys are doing well, and progressing in homeschool under the tutelage of their caring and highly competent mom! We are thankful to God to be able to say at this time not only, "It is well with our souls," but more generally, "it is well all around."

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As we have communicated from the beginning, it is our intention to work toward the financial self-sufficiency of CRBC Barbados, and CRBC Barbados is already covering 100% of its own expenses with the sole exception of my (Jon's) salary.

Initially we had planned for the local church here to begin paying 33% of my salary in 2021, but we felt that it

would be better, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, to defer that step another year and to continue paying 100% of my salary from overseas in 2021. We would rather not burden the fledgling church here with the extra financial pressure of taking 33% of my salary in 2021 in the midst of halted momentum and ministry limitations and the general instability and uncertainty that everyone is already experiencing at the moment.

And we are thankful to be able to report that our current partners have pledged enough in 2021 to meet our needs for this year. So while we are not actively soliciting new donors, we are hoping that everyone who has already been contributing will do so again in 2021 at the same rate as previously. So if you're still able to contribute this year it will be greatly appreciated!



So in summary, as said at the beginning, the work goes on! Please keep praying for us here at Covenant Reformed Baptist Church of Barbados. Pray for our outreach efforts, that

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God would add to his church through conversion! Pray for the ministry of Pastor Leigh's books, that they would receive a wide readership and bear good fruit here on the island! And pray that whatever next month and the rest of the year holds with respect to COVID-19 and other challenges or opportunities, that God will continue to sustain us and equip us here at CRBC Barbados to be faithful in the work of worship, discipleship, and evangelism: to know Christ and to make him known!

Psalm 127:1