



23rd May 2020, Saturday

To: Pastors, EDC and worshippers of Bethel Presbyterian Church,

Dear brothers and sisters, shalom!

Are you counting down to the end of Circuit Breaker? By now, most of us are aware that Singapore will be opening gradually in 3 phases. Phase 1: Safe Re-opening, Phase 2: Safe Transition and Phase 3: Safe Nation.¹ It seems like we are crossing a boundary into a seemingly unknown territory, aren't we?

Similarly, Deut 31:9-13 tells us of a people on a journey from the wilderness streaming into the Promised Land of honey and flowing milk, but yet a hostile and unfamiliar environment awaits them. They are moving further away from their centuries of slavery and ignorance of God, into a territory of the Canaanites and a fertile land promised by God. Moses reminds the Israelites,

*12 **Assemble** the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can **listen** and **learn** **to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law.** 13 Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. (Deut. 31:12-13)*

For us of this era, to “Assemble” is a taboo word. It will be a challenge to “Assemble” in Phase 1: Re-Opening since only 5 persons from the same household is permitted to gather in a place of worship. At least up till end June, there will be no physical gathering of worship in Jalan Lateh and Poh Huat Road. Located at our parsonage, the Centre for Spiritual Formation has been closed since Circuit Breaker.

To assemble we must and will continue as a Church, so that God's people listen and learn about God and, build and enjoy a wonderful relationship with Him. With different platforms and channels to listen and learn, all of us will understand “to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law”. For the last 2 months, we have worshipped God in our homes. This coming Combine Sunday Worship, do anticipate a breakthrough in our worship experience. We appreciate all those involved who have put in extraordinary amount of time and effort so that

¹ <https://www.gov.sg/article/safe-re-opening-how-singapore-will-resume-activities-after-the-circuit-breaker> , taken on 22nd May 2020, 4:18pm.



Bethel, as 5 congregations, will assemble and give Glory to His name! We hope our children and generations to come, will worship God in all circumstances.

The world before Circuit Breaker and after is the same: sun rise and set, coexistence of God's creation, family is unchanged, responsibilities remain; but quite a different pace and lifestyle. From 2nd June onwards, Day Care and Preschool will open gradually to 75-80 children. The complexity of adhering to the many requirements is mind-blowing, but highly essential for the well-being of our staff and kids. The staff at our Day Care and Preschool, as well as staff from nursing homes will be put under surveillance to proactively detect Covid-infected cases.² Let us remember them.

In Phase 1, our pastoral and staff team will continue to work from home. The earlier we begin to take root in tele-commuting, the better we can outlast this pandemic. Apart from the longer tress of hair observed during our weekly meeting, most of us are doing rather well and keeping sane. Just don't ask if anyone is gaining weight.

In Phase 1 preparation, our office has to be ready as a safe working environment. We can hear the Covid Taskforce cranking up their gears again and they will be providing directions for us soon. In staggered days, 2 members of our Live-Streaming (LS) team are coming to church, trying to facilitate the enormous task of getting LS-ready. This will be another milestone of our collective church history we will soon embark on. Even for S3P@Bethel, we are making good progress and bringing comfort to many stayers. Ps MK will update us at appropriate intervals.

Israelites are ready to cross into the Promised Land, but Jordan is stopping them. How do they cross it? How does God bring them over? We should prepare for the gradual opening of Phase 1. What "Jordan" do you have to overcome? Soon, we will be crossing the Jordan, and into the land God has promised us. It won't be an easy road to cover, but let us not fret. We "...must hear the Law and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

We will cross the Jordan into God's Promised Land. His presence will be with us. The Lord bless you and keep you. Humbly yours, Rev Lim Tau Wei.

² <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/covid-19-new-cases-death-singaporean-preschool-orange-valley-12755016>, taken on 22nd May 2020, 4:23pm.