

Dear sisters and brothers,

As I write this letter, it is seeming more and more likely that there will soon come a time when our church gatherings may have to be put on hold for a time. Already, our gatherings are depleted because of those who are unable to be with us. So I have been thinking this week about what we lose when we can't be with each other. There are many things, of course. There is so much that's good about being present with each other regularly as we meet together. So there are many things to miss and grieve when we can't.

But one of the things that's wonderful about being with each other is something that we cannot lose – the presence of Jesus. When we gather together week by week, Jesus is with us by his Spirit (Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 3:16). But of course, the promise of Christ to be with us is not limited to our gatherings. Jesus says that as we live and serve as disciples in the world, he will be with us always (Matthew 28:20). Paul teaches that the Spirit dwells within the body of every believer so we carry the presence of God with us wherever we go (1 Corinthians 6:19). How wonderful is that?

No matter what the next few weeks or months hold, and no matter how much we may grieve not being present with one other, we have this granite-like confidence – that Jesus our brother will be present with us always. I find a deep reassurance in that. I trust you do too.

With Christ by our side,

Simon.

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