



MBC Update re: Coronavirus Impact

May 12, 2020

Greetings to you, one of our many MBC friends!

As we continue to seek to lead our ministry with diligence during this COVID-19 pandemic, we will do our very best to keep you all informed regarding our status in terms of facility operations and services as well as ministry programming. Here are the updates as we have them currently along with some opportunities for you to join us in ministry. Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthier update. ☺

Campground

The campground is currently closed and we ask you to refrain from coming up to check on your trailer until we are able to open the campground. We are closely monitoring the provincial directives and developing our safety protocol so that when we get the 'go ahead' we can operate the campground safely.

Marina

Marinas have been given the go ahead to prepare boats and facility for opening but we can't yet open to the public. We are putting docks in the water and accepting boat slip reservations, but the boat ramp will remain closed until the provincial restrictions are lifted, which we hope will be very soon. You can reserve your boat slip here:

<https://www.muskokabile.com/summer/stay-with-us/campground/marina/seasonal-boat-slip-registration/>

Program Cancellations

The following ministry programming has been cancelled at this point.

- **May Long Weekend** – we will not have any programming occurring during this weekend and our facility will remain closed down, including any recreation amenities (yes – the beach is also off limits, sorry).
- **May and June programmed and partner retreats**
 - Including the Women of Grace Retreats, FEB Pastors Retreat, etc.
- **Creation Ministries Super Conference** (rescheduled to end August 2021)
- **Camp Widjiitiwin** – we have made the difficult decision to cancel our summer overnight and day camp programming for Camp Widjiitiwin. We believe this is our best possible decision given the lack of clarity on where the government will be landing on decisions for summer camp as well as the expected safety protocol that will be required for implementation should camps be allowed to open. We want to ensure that when we do run our children and youth camp again it can be done with excellence and safely. We are holding off on a decision regarding the SALT leadership program, as there may yet be some options to run this given the current situation.
- **Student Staffing (Stepping Stones)** – at this point we are not in a position to make a confirmed decision on bringing any students in for work prior to June 5th. We will notify any students that have been contracted with updates as soon as we can.

Upcoming Opportunities

We do want to make you aware of some excellent opportunities to stay connected with us during this spring. Please consider joining us for any or all of these online events.

Annual General Meeting, May 17, 2020 starting at 4 PM. You can register for this using this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Brj_sMOzQnm-qKqyUGxCog

Resilient Family Webinar: Parenting Teens. This interactive webinar will present some basic principles to consider as you parent the teens in your family. It will be hosted by John Friesen and include 5 other panelists who form the MBC Ministry Team. You will need to pre-register for this event using this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9015892131040/WN_MnMGXSRHQnOKmi_YJ_Sew7A

Women of Grace Virtual Retreat on June 6, 2020 starting at 9:45 am. Our Virtual Women of Grace Spring Retreat will be available online at no cost to you. We have Linda Reed from Heritage College and Seminary teaching us on 'Be Still and Know – to Know God in His Strengthening Power'. We will have an interactive teaching session with Sandra Loewen from Precept Ministries "How to Study the Bible for Yourself" and a zoom prayer meeting where you can meet with a group of up to 7 other women to pray. Register using this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2515887948353/WN_9vu9XLjaS5WxTCXUNT3eRQ

#MenNeedFriends – I am also working on a plan to initiate some small, informal Zoom calls with other men. It would be a time of encouragement, laughing together and praying for one another. If you have an interest in participating, please email me at john.friesen@muskokabible.com.

Finances

Not surprisingly, Muskoka Bible Centre is also experiencing the financial stress associated with COVID-19. Our shutdown began in mid-March and will extend as long as mandated by the government and our ability to host guests in a safe manner. Our leadership team took significant, immediate action to reduce costs in order to preserve cash and be prudent with the resources God has entrusted to us.

We believe that some of our guest activity will begin opening up for the summer and then increasingly in the fall and winter. However, we just don't know what the medium term operating situation will look like until there is more clarity on the permitted size of gatherings, safety protocol, etc.

2020 represents the 90th Anniversary of MBC! This was to be the year when we were going to press hard into our 'debt demolition' efforts. By God's most amazing and gracious provision, our debt load has been reduced from \$5.8 million in 2009 to just around \$500,000 at the end of 2019.

Our objective was to be at 'zero' debt by the end of 2021.

Then COVID-19 hit and the prospect of eliminating our debt in the short term became more unlikely. We do praise God that the financial stability achieved over the past 10 years has positioned us to weather this storm as we continue to rely on God's provision for continued ministry into the future.

Our team has been working diligently with our Board to assess the potential scenarios that might exist in the short and medium term, along with the financial implications of these scenarios. Each scenario will see a need for some new financing for the short and medium term.

So in this respect we ask that you pray with us for God's provision and wisdom during this season. We are thankful for the generosity of our friends in supporting us with donations and will continue to trust God to provide in this way. If you are interested in donating you can do so online at www.muskokabiblefoundation.com or by calling the office at 705.789.0123. If you have other ideas or suggestions, please email me at john.friesen@muskokabible.com and I'd love to have a conversation.

In closing I'd like to encourage you to keep pressing hard into your faith in Jesus Christ. There are many things that could distract us during this season but what remains most important are the things of eternal value. This is an opportune time to stand out as a witness for Christ. May these words of Paul be an encouragement to us all and guide our conduct this season, to the glory of our great God.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
(Colossians 3:12-15 ESV)

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Friesen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Friesen
CEO, Muskoka Bible Centre / Muskoka Bible Foundation