



Dear friends,

Hope you're doing well.

Even though it's only been a week or so since the last prayer letter update, I have some news that I need to share with you that impacts our work with the Christian Unions.

Furlough Leave

It is now nearly two weeks since most of the universities closed their doors in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. I think all of my students have been able to get safely to where they need to be.

We are so grateful to the Lord that the universities remained open for long enough to follow up the interested students from events weeks and also to run a full set of Regional Forums to train the newly-appointed CU leaders.

The past two weeks have been a bit frenetic as I have been doing one-to-one discipleship with student leaders, learning how to run Bible studies and do essential initial planning sessions with the CU committees on Zoom. I have spent a lot of time on Zoom planning and replanning with my CU committees and Relay workers as the situation has continued to evolve. It is amazing what can be done all over the country – even virtual CU meetings, 'grill a Christians' and lunch bars – but it is a poor substitute to being a gathered Christian Union meeting at the heart of the campus.

I've been so encouraged to see how CU members keep being hopeful about the current situation and are wanting to keep planning meetings and events for next year. Alongside that, they are in a state of uncertainty, not sure what next term brings and with a lot of their teaching appearing online. For final year students, it's the saddest time, as their degree shows are being cancelled which greatly impacts their career and future.

Most CU operations have now moved online, our National Forum is planned, students are getting signed up and some good programmes for freshers' week are gradually taking shape.

In line with others in the charity sector, UCCF is granting most of its office and field-staff an eight-week period of furlough leave, during April and May. This will enable me to take proper time to pray, reflect, study and be able to come back to the students refreshed and energised. Given the closure of our universities and the impact this has on our day-to-day ministry, UCCF head office will apply for government support (for part of my full salary and costs) from the Coronavirus Job Retention Programme (CJRP) for these eight weeks of Furlough. There is no guarantee that I will qualify, but **please pray** for our application to the scheme. Any assistance will help to cushion some of the financial shocks that are likely in the coming months. **Please pray too**, that I will make the most of these 8 weeks of rest, in advance of our anticipated busy months of CU planning, CU leadership training and preparation for Forum.

Student-led virtual CUs will continue and we have been working to get them set up during our brief period of Furlough. My Arts students will still be able to make the most of the wealth of resources on the **Arts Network** website equipping them to engage with others studying in their field and plans for Forum are coming together where we plan to run a training track for each of the Leadership Networks. **The students are continuing with Interface and guest speakers on Zoom and encouraging each other to pray for one person each to share the gospel with during this time.**

contact

UCCF: The Christian Unions
Blue Boar House
5 Blue Boar Street
Oxford, OX1 4EE

T: 01865 253678
E: email@uccf.org.uk
www.uccf.org.uk
registered charity no. 306 137

Thank you so much for standing with me and enabling this vital ministry to continue. More than ever I'm grateful for your partnership which is upholding me and the work of the CUs in prayer. Do let me know how I can be praying for you at this particularly difficult time. Feel free to text/call me on **07735578060** or email **alexionalucas@gmail.com** to let me know how you are and how I can be praying for you during this time.

I'm very grateful to those of you who are continuing to support me financially too. You will shortly be receiving a letter from Richard Cunningham, UCCF Director, telling you about this time of Furlough, but I also wanted to reassure you that your gifts will continue to support me in this role and are vital for ensuring the sustainability of my work. It remains an ongoing priority of mine to raise as much as I can towards the cost of my role. I recognise that the upcoming season may bring all sorts of financial pressures to many individuals and families, as well as charities like UCCF. I'm praying for you all. And I'd ask that you pray for me to continue to find willing financial partners in this ministry.

I really would love to hear how you and your family are and to be able to pray for you during this time, please do email me on **alexionalucas@gmail.com** and I will be praying for you.

Prayer requests

Pray for all my CUs: University of the Arts London, Ravensbourne, Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, Westminster Harrow, Courtauld Institute of Art and the Royal College of Art. **Pray** that gospel witness will continue during this time.

Pray for the programme that I've planned with my students this week: that it will be useful and an encouragement to all CU and Interface members. **Pray** that Jesus will be glorified and that he will be using my CU committees well! Pray they rely on Jesus in everything.

Pray for Interface May to go really well with James Watts speaking on his experience in the Interior Design world, as well as encouraging the students during this time.

Pray that each Arts student commits to praying for one person they would like to share the gospel with this term.

Pray that UCCF's application to the Coronavirus Job Retention Programme (CJRP) will be successful.

Pray that I make the most of the next 8 weeks of rest. I'm quite emotionally drained and tired from 2 very busy terms, so this news comes to me as a relief. **Pray** I enjoy time with Jesus, supporting Sam as he continues to work from home, and that I use my time well with my weaving practice.

Praise God that he has answered our prayers with moving to our new flat amidst this pandemic! Sam and I are moving into our new place on the 6th of April. **Pray** this will go smoothly with no complications, and that once things get back to normal, we can use our new home well to serve others.

And lastly, **keep praying that God will use this time of uncertainty to build his Kingdom. Pray for revival amongst Arts students and that we'll hear of many students coming to faith during this time!**

Thank you

This morning I was reading **Psalm 62:5-7** which reminded me that even when we know that God is our refuge, we can easily forget it. I love how David is telling his soul of the truth that we have in God.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.

He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Psalm 62:5-7

In the midst of uncertainty, it's amazing to know that our hope in God is firm like a mighty rock. I'm praying now for all of you to find rest in him.

I'll be in touch in June! Do contact me, as I would love to see how you're doing.

Much love, Alex

Prayer letters are sent to the personal supporters of our staff every few months. To stop receiving this, please contact the staff member, email registry@uccf.org.uk or call 01865 253 678.

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