



The Uniting Church in Australia

BELROSE UNITING CHURCH

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COVID – 19 Virus Up-date

20th March 2020

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

You may be wondering how the COVID-19 virus situation will impact how we gather as a Church. The Government has already issued edicts banning outside gatherings of 500 or more, and inside gatherings of 100 or more. Accordingly, most local churches have decided to suspend their Sunday Services and other large gatherings. **What about us?**

The Church Council has been deliberating on an appropriate response for us in these challenging times. The Church Council feels the great responsibility we have for the care of our Church members and the wider community. Furthermore, we have received communication from the UCA Synod and Presbytery with the strong recommendation that all Congregations suspend their Sunday services.

Consequently, the Church Council has determined that our Sunday Services and other large gatherings will be suspended effective Monday 23rd March 2020.

We will not gather as Church on Sundays at our Worship Centre in Morgan Road after Sunday 22nd March, until otherwise advised, however long that may be.

This is a sad but necessary action for the welfare and safety of our Church family and wider community in light of the current situation.

What will this mean for us as a Church?

We can still meet in small groups for fellowship, Bible Study and prayer. However, each small group should determine its own response, and some groups may feel it inappropriate to meet for the physical welfare of its members.

I will endeavour to provide every member of our Church with a **weekly worship and devotional news letter** that you can use by yourself at home or in a small group. It will have prayers, a Bible reading and reflection, and news and information for ongoing prayer. **Please make sure I have your current & up-to-date email and post addresses – if you are uncertain, send me an email mail@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au**

You can also make use of the various online ministries offering sermons that you can listen to at home.

I have found St Helen's Bishopsgate www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/all/ and All Souls www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx very helpful and encouraging sources of Bible based preaching that builds my faith.

I will seek to make contact with as many people as possible on a regular basis for **pastoral care and prayer**.

(If you become ill with COVID-19 or any other affliction, it is important that you let me know so that I can respond appropriately in prayer and pastoral care.)

Weekly Prayer gatherings will continue each week on Thursdays at the Church as usual. They are smaller gatherings, but we will hold them in the Worship Space rather than the Family Room which is too confined. So please feel free to join in those prayer times.

Please keep giving! Cancelling our services will **impact us financially** without regular Sunday offerings. So I strongly encourage you to make use of the electronic funds transfer option. We still need to pay our bills and support our missions!

You can set up regular money transfers from your bank account to the Church account using the following information:

Belrose Uniting Church BSB 634-634 Account Number 10000-1487

Please let me know if you are unable to establish this bank transfer giving system, or if you prefer to give by an alternate method.

In the mean time,

Maintain Relationships: It is important for us to remember that we are followers of Jesus and that we are called to live by faith, so in times like this we need to resist being fearful, encouraging each other and looking out for one another, seeking to treat all we meet with consideration, respecting personal hygiene boundaries. Take opportunities to be in phone contact with your Church family. **And please let others whom you think may not have received this letter know about our situation.**

Care for others: How do we love our neighbour, and love ourselves?

It might be to check in on those who are vulnerable or live alone.

It might be an important few minutes to spend ringing a few people to check on their supplies. The offer of topping up their supplies might also serve to contain their fears, which would be a neighbourly thing to do.

Today, we face the challenge of expressing our love and care in new ways. With a bit of creativity and light heartedness, we can express our love to those around us.

Pray: The other thing that we are called to do is pray.

Pray for wisdom for government and health authorities, and that the effects of this virus might be restrained.

Pray for the sick, vulnerable and fearful, and pray that we can all live a life free from fear, for *"Nothing is impossible for God!"* Luke 1:37

If you have any questions, concerns or anxieties, please don't hesitate to make contact with me by phone or email.

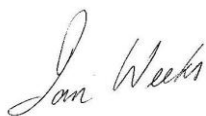
We live in very interesting and challenging times, experiencing something that many of us have never been through before. Please be assured of my prayers for you and your families. Please pray for me as I adapt to this very different style of ministry and ways of being Church.

As you go about your days in this uncertain time, I pray that you will be aware of the certain presence of our gracious God, and the strength and comfort of the Holy Spirit sustaining you.

The LORD bless you and keep you;

the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Number 6:24 - 26



Ian Weeks

On behalf of the Church Council