

Dear Church family,

As you can appreciate, this week has brought with it significant and radical change to the way Australian's have been called to operate day to day.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way. (Psalm 46:1)

As followers of Jesus, we have an eternal hope that will never perish spoil or fade. Now more than ever, we need to act in selfless love, to serve the community and make known the name of Jesus.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many members of the community are fearful of the coming months and what might happen. Whilst we should not be fearful, we should each look to the interest of others, having the same mindset as Christ Jesus (Phil. 2)

The session and I have decided to temporarily move our church gatherings online for a time. This decision has not been made lightly, but in our view is the most responsible course of action at this time.

This is an intentional step to care for our community, prevent the unnecessary transmission of the virus, yet still proclaim the gospel and embrace Christian community in meaningful ways.

The practical implications of this decision include;

- 1) There will be a live stream on Sunday which you can participate in via YouTube or Facebook (links will be sent in a separate email)
 - a. We will continue to pray, read the word and preach.
 - b. There will be some adjustment.
- 2) Our Growth Groups will meet via Zoom/Skype etc.
 - a. Your Growth Group Leader will be in contact regarding your particular group prior to your next meeting.
- 3) Each weekday at 10am I will host an **outdoor** prayer meeting at Norwood (79 The Parade Norwood)
 - a. Out of love for neighbour we will exercise appropriate hygiene at these meetings including;
 - i. Minimum 1.5-meter distancing
 - ii. Hand hygiene
 - iii. Self-exclusion if exhibiting cold/flu like symptoms.
- 4) Your Pastors, Elders and/or Leaders will be in regular phone contact during this period of adjusted operation.
- 5) If you have particular concerns or require specific assistance, please either reply to this email or contact your local elder.

Whilst these changes will have an impact on us all, and feel particularly uncomfortable for some, can I encourage you to think through how you can support your local community at this time.

Our vision as a church is to be *Growing Healthy disciples of Jesus, who make disciples of Jesus, in the city of churches and to the ends of the earth*. Now more than ever we require health, both physically, emotionally, spiritually and relationally.

Whilst we have been called to social distancing, that does not equate to emotional or relational distancing.

You may wish to consider some of the following suggestions;

- 1) (After following appropriate hand hygiene) Write a note to your neighbours (1,2,3,10, 20 doors down) with your contact details and offer to connect with them offering;
 - a. To do shopping for them/pharmacy run
 - b. A person to chat to
 - c. Posting mail
 - d. Prayer
 - e. Willingness to support in anyway practicable
- 2) Place two outdoor chairs in your front yard (more than 1.5m apart) to facilitate face to face conversation with neighbours, friends and church members.
- 3) Be considerate when attending shopping centres to not buy more than necessary to care for others in the community.
- 4) If you are in any of the high-risk categories, you may wish to provide clear communication to others about your wishes with signage on your front door.

Further details will be provided in due course.

If you have any questions or concern, please let me know.

Cheers,

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