

March 2020



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Dear pastors and chairpersons,

The peace of the Lord be with you.

By now you will no doubt be considering the implications of today's updated government restrictions on indoor and outdoor gatherings, among other things. I ask you to stay ready to receive and work with LCA Church-wide advice. Updated LCA advice will most likely appear again later today on the LCA website home page and via regular LCA e-News.

Be aware that the College of Bishops will be discussing the latest developments at our planned on-line meeting tomorrow (Thursday). The Church-wide office and District Administrators are also meeting on Friday. No doubt further advice will be given to the whole church after those meetings.

I would encourage the following general approach:

- You will need to interpret government and Church-wide advice locally according to context, eg size and demographic. Don't stop worshipping too early or unnecessarily. Continue while you can within government restrictions and LCA advice. We know you want to be responsible but please don't debilitate worship or ministry more than the government says you need to at this point. This could be an extended time so we don't want to dislocate our people for longer than we need to. We are being encouraged to keep living and that includes worshipping responsibly. Having said that, we will trust your local judgement.
- Some members may choose not to worship, and they need to be encouraged to alert you so you can care for them in other ways. Look out for those who may fall between the cracks.
- If you normally have more than 100 attendees in one gathering think creatively about breaking it down to smaller gatherings, different times or spaces and days etc.
- See this coming Sunday as a golden opportunity for ministry together while we can still meet at all. Maybe even have a short sermon and spend time reflecting with your people, fielding their questions, and talking over how ministry might happen over the coming months and where it won't be happening.
- Work together now as pastors and leaders and members to discern how you will stay connected with your people if / when the situation becomes even more restrictive. Look for opportunities to be the church in new or different ways and to continue to bless, encourage and serve.
- Zones pastors can still gather and encourage each other in being effective pastorally as the weeks unfold.

- Please keep the District informed about what you are doing (and not doing) with regularity. Please email Michelle at michelle.storie@lca.org.au with your worship plans and ideas.

We will try to stay in contact with you regularly along the way.

Every blessing as you serve God's people and give witness to the world to the Lord.

“Christ give me the strength to face everything” – Philippians 4:13

Pastor David Altus
Bishop
LCA SA-NT District

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