

Updated ADVICE REGARDING COVID-19
as at 19 March
High Street Uniting Church, Frankston

Dear all,

As we navigate this difficult time, may God give us grace, courage, patience and peace. I write this to keep you informed of how we are navigating the situation as it continues to develop. For the health and safety of the whole community, we need to meet differently for a while. This builds on the advice circulated last week. Below is information about

1. Traditional Worship
2. Contemporary Worship
3. Other meetings, including Tuesday Communion
4. Offerings
5. Pastoral Care
6. Decisions to be made next week

1. Traditional worship

We are in the process of moving towards services that people can connect to by phone. This Sunday, 22 March, we will hold a brief service at the church at the normal time (9am), and at 10am we will run a service that people can join by phone. It is likely that by the following week, the service will be entirely by phone – there will be further advice about that at the time.

The 9am service probably be a 30 minute service. It will be necessary for people to sit a little bit apart, rather than immediately next to each other. The service will include songs, prayer, reflection, and the opportunity for some personal prayer afterwards. As much as the choir is singing beautifully, this service will not include the choir this week. Unfortunately we will not be able to have morning tea afterwards.

At 10am there will be a service that you can phone into – you can phone in anytime after 9:50am. The service will involve prayer, a Bible reading and some reflection. If you are able to have a Bible with you when you phone, that would be great. The service will probably be about 20-30 minutes, and there will be some learning along the way. To join it, phone the number below, then when prompted type the meeting ID number into the phone keypad, followed by the hash (#) key.

Phone **(03) 7018 2005.**
Meeting ID **616 254 006**

2. Contemporary worship

This week we were going to be having a 5:30pm service led by the youth. We're rearranging things and invite you to join in an online gathering for worship, with shared leadership and

room for contribution from participants. **We will still run the service at 5:30pm, but over the internet and not at the church.**

We will be using Zoom for worship. If you have a computer or phone with a camera and microphone (laptops usually have those built-in), you should be able to run zoom - there is a link below. If you don't have access to such things or find them difficult, you can simply "phone in". While those who phone in will miss some of the video material, we will try to minimise that. The main value of the video link is the opportunity to see other participants on your screen to enhance our interactions and sense of community.

The worship will include music video clips at the beginning and end. There will be prayers, for which various readers will be invited; there will be Bible reading together with some reflection; and there will be prayers, which will include an opportunity to contribute your own prayers either by the "chat" function (which we will explain at the time) or verbally.

At around 5:20 or so, I suggest that you link in using these instructions:

From a computer, go to: <https://zoom.us/j/556610676>

By phone, try tapping this link: **61370182005,,556610676#**

or phone this number: **(03) 7018 2005**

The meeting ID number is: **556 610 676**

I suggest that you have a go with zoom prior to Sunday evening, to check your set-up. You can do that at <https://zoom.us/test>

3. Other meetings

This week there have still been small group Bible studies. Care an attention is required to:

- * maintaining good personal hygiene (lots of hand washing)
- * avoiding physical contact
- * not being in close proximity to one another (see other government advice)
- * avoiding shared food

It is likely that even these meetings will need to stop, but participants are encouraged to phone one another at the times that they would otherwise been meeting.

Tuesday Holy Communion is cancelled until further notice; participants are being contacted by letter.

Other small groups, including the Choir, LEGS, Mission Guild, etc., are asked not to meet at this time.

4. Offerings

Some members of the congregations make offerings by direct debit, some by using envelopes and some as loose offerings of cash. When we are meeting for worship by phone or internet, the latter approaches will not work. You may wish to donate directly to the church bank account, for which the details are:

BSB **063 133**
Account **800128**
with the description **OFFERING**

We will also be losing the income from large groups hiring the premises, as those gathering have also been cancelled. The recently passed budget will need revision in due course as the impact becomes clear. The loss of hire income is likely to be of the order of \$2000-3000 per month.

5. Pastoral Care

As noted in last week's advice, pastoral care will need to be attended to carefully. If you are intending to visit someone who may be vulnerable or who may be have exposed to the virus it would be wise to phone beforehand. Of course, only visit if you have not had any known exposure to the virus or display any symptoms.

If you are in self-isolation, please let us know – either call your Elder (for Traditional congregation members), one of the COG members, the office (9783 3400), or me (0407 861 092). If you need help with food (or toilet paper!) please don't hesitate to ask and we will do what we can.

Over the next few days we will review the Contemporary worship lists and try to ensure that those who attend the Contemporary services have appropriate pastoral care. **If you don't think that you have someone who is likely to keep in touch with you, please reach out to me or to the office by phone or email.** If you are on email and you don't think we have your email details, please call the office and let us know (9783 3400, or frankstonuc@gmail.com)

6. Decisions to be made next week

Next week I will be consulting with members of the Church Council and the Ministry Team regarding the Easter celebrations and the May Fete. I will provide further updates when they are available.

In the advice that I sent last week, I concluded with the first line of Psalm 46 – God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Today I conclude with the last line of the same Psalm: The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. In whatever new ways are required at the moment may God give us grace to worship, pray, be caring, and rest in God's love.

Peace and grace,
David