



COVID-19 and UCA Gatherings – Call to action

Further Information and advice from
Port Phillip East Presbytery
Uniting Church in Australia

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In the light of the growing seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Port Phillip East Presbytery urgently calls church councils on behalf of congregations to prepare ways of gathering differently. We recommend that congregations minimize face-to-face meetings as much as possible, including gathering for public worship. This is to provide for mutual distancing and isolation, for the sake of our members and the wider community. We recommend that immediate action be taken.

It is highly likely that, in the near future, government requirements will make it necessary to stop public gatherings of any size. The Presbytery Standing Committee is suspending face-to-face Presbytery events until further notice, and committee meetings will be held using online meeting technology. This is to minimize the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus as much as possible. Presbytery staff and others are offering support to congregations to move to a safer way of connecting with members over the coming months.

We are facing an escalating situation that places people of all ages in grave danger, particularly those with vulnerable health conditions and those in their senior years. Acting now, rather than later, improves the chances of sparing our members and their loved ones from un-needed suffering and even death, as well as doing all we can to help prevent a total overwhelming of health care services.

We are aware that congregations have already been grappling with the difficult issues concerning the virus. As the Uniting Church in Australia, we have a responsibility to show leadership in the way our community responds to significant challenges. The Presbytery Standing Committee takes very seriously

the welfare of congregations and ministry agents in the Port Phillip East region. Church Councils carry responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their members, as well as that of the people who use church premises. This responsibility includes the pastoral care of people as they adjust to a new way of living over the coming weeks and months.

We are aware that we are all facing a lot of uncertainty. Please be assured of our prayers and commitment to provide pastoral support and practical resources for the times ahead. You will hear from Standing Committee regularly as the situation evolves.

Andrew Boyle, Presbytery Chair
ajmboyle@optusnet.com.au, 0409 869 009

Duncan Macleod, Presbytery Minister: Team Leader
Pm-tl@ucappep.org
0439 828 718

www.ucappep.org