



St Luke's
LUTHERAN CHURCH
A growing Community

CONTACT

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Dear Friends in Christ,

⁹ Let love be genuine... ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (Romans 12:9,12)

6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. (2 Corinthians 1:6)

We are a people of hope, thriving in love, and seeking to serve one another regardless of the situations life throws at us. We share each other's struggle and endure together as brothers and sisters in Christ. The faith we confess is then heart of who we are, it is not non-essential or irrelevant, it is fundamental to the path we now share. Christians need to cling to that hope, show love in action, and be constant in prayer.

Over the past week the leadership and staff have been discussing how we minister to you during the coronavirus. I am writing to share the outcomes of that meeting.

Our primary concerns for you are:

- Ensuring your safety.
- Comforting anxiety or reducing fear.
- Providing social engagement within limitations, and
- Offering spiritual and pastoral support.

While there are currently no reported cases of coronavirus in Albury/Wodonga, we will act as if there may be. This is as much for reassurance and comfort as it is if a case manifests in our region.

Safe practices & Social Distancing

Everyone at St Luke's needs to feel safe. Consequently, we will discourage bodily contact, and ask you to show common sense about social distancing.

Importantly, if you are feeling unwell, or have flu like symptoms, we ask you refrain from interacting with anyone at St Luke's.

Pastoral Contact

Every St Luke's member will receive a regular weekly phone call to connect with them and see if there are ways we can help. We encourage you to:

- Talk about your fears and concerns and be encouraged to hold fast to the hope and faith we share.

- Talk about your physical needs and how you think we can help you with these.
- Talk about the physical needs of others you know and share how.
- Talk about your spiritual and pastoral needs and share how you think we can meet these.

I urge you to accept these calls with grace. While we may not be in isolation, these calls are intended to ensure we remain connected if that occurs.

We encourage you to look after your neighbours, friends and family. We have enclosed a card you can drop into people who are self-isolating or quarantined, to let them know they have support if they need it.

Public Worship

We will no longer hold public worship until the time we are permitted to do so.

We will not run Easter services.

We will do the following:

- Provide you with a simple service rite including Holy Communion which you can do at home.
- Provide you with Holy Communion wafers to use – we ask you use your own wine or grape juice or red cordial.
- Set a time that everyone can do this rite at home with your family – if everyone does this at the same time it reminds us that while alone we are together as one.

Fellowship and Gatherings

We will not come together as we normally would. All groups can no longer meet until we are told we can.

Funerals

We will still do funerals, however, these will be conducted at the funeral home, graveside or crematorium and be for close family only.

Offerings

The coronavirus measures seriously affects all Australian small businesses, including churches. It affects spending, employment, and retirement funds.

Two thirds of our weekly offerings come through the offering plate in public worship. As people isolate and locked down, our capacity to meet our financial

obligations are impacted. Church council is exploring how the Government stimulus packages apply to us.

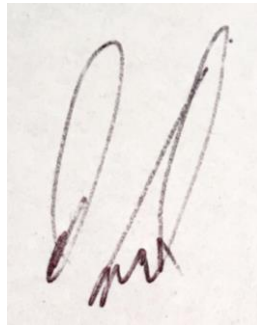
We encourage you to note of the options in the **Lutheran Light** and seriously consider an alternative method of giving. We encourage you to find a way your weekly offering can continue to meet our financial commitments.

Conclusion

We can only prepare, and act, based on the advice we have at the time. Things may change rapidly. The best advice you can get is from the Federal government health department – www.health.gov.au.

We ask for your prayers at this time as we adjust to the needs of supporting and caring for you. Together, as people of grace, God will bring us through this time to his glory and praise.

Yours in Christ,



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