

14 April 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Who would have thought the day would come when Easter services would be received by members of our congregations sitting in their living rooms? But the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has forced churches across the world to do things very differently. We are delighted with the work that our part of the church has done to date in supporting our communities in these times and know that our mission as the body of Christ continues unabated.

#### Key messages

- The first in a series of reflection pieces by Rev Dr Jenny Tymms is available.
- Changes to the *Non-essential business, activity and undertaking Closure Direction* issued by the Chief Health Officer in Queensland will impact upon livestreaming for congregations.
- A fact sheet has been developed to assist you in navigating changes to commercial tenancies legislation.

#### Reflective practices during COVID-19

Rev Dr Jenny Tymms has written the first in her series of reflection pieces, entitled [For a time such as this](#). These pieces are designed to support ministry agents and members of the church on your spiritual and mental health journey during COVID-19.

#### Key updates

The advice provided in the update on 7 April 2020 remains current with the following comments:

- The [Non-essential business, activity and undertaking Closure Direction](#) by the Chief Health Officer in Queensland was updated on 9 April 2020. The restrictions around weddings, and funerals and livestreaming of these specific services are largely unchanged. That is, for weddings a maximum attendance of five people with no more than one person per four square metres; and funerals attended by a maximum of 10 people with no more than one person per four square metres, except if an exemption is granted on compassionate grounds by the Chief Health Officer. It has been clarified that the person conducting the funeral service is in addition to the 10 attendees. Live streaming of a wedding or funeral may be conducted with the maximum number of people outlined above at the worship location.
- The directive states that other church services are to be conducted by no more than five people including the camera operator with social distancing observed. The directive specifically refers to livestreaming, as opposed to pre-recorded services. The Moderator has written to the Chief Health Officer today in order to seek clarification as to what this means, we will provide a further update as soon as it is available.
- For the first five weeks of term two, Queensland schools will deliver curriculum remotely with schools open only for the children of essential workers. This decision will be revisited on 22 May 2020.
- We are being urged to get our flu vaccinations now to reduce the strain on the health system caused by COVID-19.
- The [Border restrictions Directive](#) has been updated which applies for people who are visiting Queensland from other states or territories in Australia.

### **Liturgical resources**

To draw our whole church into shared worship, and to give ministry agents and teams some rest, the Moderator will lead a video-based service for Sunday 19 April 2020. The service is based on the lectionary for Easter 2 and will include a reading from John 20: 19-31 and music from Leichhardt Uniting Church in addition to prayers of adoration and confession and prayers for the world. This service in full and a second video of just the sermon separately will be available on the [Synod coronavirus website](#) on Friday 17 April as well as Synod social media channels like Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo. A link will be included in Friday's update. We encourage you to make use of this resource.

### **Commercial tenancies**

On 3 April 2020, that the National Cabinet issued a draft National Mandatory Code of Conduct that is intended to apply to retail, office and industrial leases held by small to medium enterprises during COVID-19. This draft Code was endorsed by National Cabinet on 7 April 2020 and is to be implemented (and enforced) by legislation in each of the States and Territories of Australia with effect from 3 April 2020.

To support congregations in understanding this Code, a fact sheet has been developed and is on the [Synod coronavirus website](#).

### **Industrial relations**

The [employer frequently asked question](#) document has been updated which includes decisions by the Fair Work Commission.

### **Volunteering with UnitingCare Queensland**

Do you have experience in sewing garments and have a sewing machine or overlocker? UnitingCare is developing a program to make scrubs and gowns for frontline health workers using materials donated to Lifeline.

We are still stitching up the details but if you would like to register your interest and provide your sewing experience, we'll be sure to let you know more details when we're ready to start. Register your interest here [online](#) or read the [information sheet](#).

### **Working from home**


The Australian Taxation Office has released a [shortcut](#) to help people calculate their expenses while they work from home.

### **Synod office support – Line of credit facility**

The cash flow forecast spreadsheet has been updated to allow congregations to provide commentary and notes to support their numbers. This spreadsheet is available on the [Synod coronavirus website](#).

Unless there is a need provide an extra-ordinary update, our next COVID-19 update will be sent on Friday 17 April 2020.

Our prayers are with you during this unprecedented time.



Rev David Baker

Moderator

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod



Rev Heather den Houting

General Secretary

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod