

A memo to

All Parishioners of Christ Church Mount Gambier and St Luke's Mount Schank

From

Parish Council

Regarding

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

Dear people of God, we write to inform you that at a meeting of Parish Council on the evening of Wednesday, 19th March 2020 it was decided to:

Cancel all services in our churches and curtail all church activities and unnecessary meetings until further notice.

This decision was based on:

- the high average age of people in our congregations and their subsequent elevated risk
- the likelihood of church visitors and tourists bringing infection to our region
- The difficulty of maintaining social distancing within the church buildings
- The difficulty of assuring hand washing and appropriate sanitization
- The already announced closure of four other churches within the Mount Gambier community

Consequent to this decision –

1. There will be no further meetings of established church groups including the following:

- The Choir and Contemporary Music Group
- Meditation group
- Bible study
- Mother's Union
- Parish Council, Liturgy, Parish Development, Workplace Health and Safety, Fundraising

2. The Annual Vestry Meeting is also officially postponed

3. The Bell Tower Op Shop

Regrettably this community service will also close. For the following reasons:

- High average age of those who volunteer and utilise the facility
- The tactile nature of activity (handling of materials in which the virus is known to linger).
- Inability to guarantee and maintain sanitization standard of goods on arrival and during handling by clients
- Our responsibility towards our volunteers at a time when contact, exposure due to crowding and social distancing are issues of appropriate social responsibility.

Which activities will continue?

Parish Council Executive

This small group will continue to meet and make administrative decisions on behalf of the whole council. Email will be used to inform and elicit votes and opinion from other councillors.

Priestly Ministry

Fr Neil will celebrate the Eucharist privately on behalf of us all each weekend and pray for us. He will continue pastoral ministry by phone and by visitation where responsible and safe procedures can be assured. We will make use of the parish website and public media for preaching and teaching, and to maintain connectedness to one another and God.

The Parish Office

Lynn, Ginny and Maree will attend the office in usual hours, administer usual duties and prepare weekly news sheets. Principle communication will be via email and phone call.

However, the office door will remain locked and a notice will advise that office visitation is restricted and to call by telephone in the first instance.

Emergency food ministry

In the short term this will continue. We will distribute commercially packaged, but not home prepared food to the needy who make appointment, then follow safe procedure.

It is to be noted however that Foodbank and the Community Assistance Network report that due to panic buying, reduced amounts of food is being passed through to emergency relief organisations such as ours.

There is also the risk of requests increasing well beyond the number with which we can cope.

What can we all do?

- Pray diligently, pray daily.
- Maintain social distancing and remain close to God.
- Look after each other! Call by phone, chat by text, write by email. Communicate regularly with the sick and the lonely. Seek help for those you worry about.
- It is a time to lay low at home but to remain active by looking after yourself as best you can and supporting others.
- Keep up and if possible, increase your regular giving. There will be a separate communique about this in the next day or so.

Contacts

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Parish Council	Jeff Bowman	0487 486 260
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God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; Ps 46

Parish Council, Christ Church, Mount Gambier