



WEST HAWTHORN UNITING CHURCH

COVID-19 15 March 2020



Policy at WHUC during the COVID-19 pandemic

The West Hawthorn Uniting Church acknowledges that this can be a particularly stressful time for our community, and that many will feel vulnerable, frightened and isolated. Please remain caring and respectful of each other at all times.

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4: 2-3

Note that over coming weeks the advice from our Federal and State authorities will evolve and change, sometimes quite rapidly. To keep up with the latest advice please visit:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

At our church:

Property - Additional attention to hygiene, disinfection of frequently touched objects such as door handles, sinks and taps. Taking care in any food preparation and presentation, with adequate facilities for hand washing. Posters have been placed around the church centre.

Playgroup – Currently in recess, and that will continue for the immediate future.

Meetings and other activities – Avoid unnecessary meetings. Look at alternatives such as email communications, and postpone non-essential gatherings and functions when appropriate.

Worship – Members are asked to stay home if feeling unwell. Avoid hugs, kisses and handshakes. For *Passing The Peace*, consider facing the person with hands pressed together at the heart and a slight bow of the head.

Holy Communion – Care will be taken when preparing bread and wine, with individual glasses for juice and pre-cut bread. Those preparing the elements will wash hands and wear gloves. The minister presiding should cleanse hands thoroughly and visibly, immediately before handling the bread and wine. Anyone assisting should do likewise.

6. Pastoral care – Opportunities for face-to-face pastoral contact may diminish. Home visits may not be welcomed. Phone and email contacts will be encouraged. Hospitals and aged care facilities may be quarantined, preventing access to patients and elderly members of the congregation. Be especially aware of needs and vulnerability of frontline medical staff, including hospital chaplains.

Stay calm – If the situation deteriorates some may panic, perhaps exhibiting hostility towards anyone who looks Chinese. Help your congregation stay cool and keep things in perspective.

Keep Calm but don't soldier on. Anyone can catch this virus and be required to self-isolate and follow medical advice. Please take care of yourselves at this time.

As we all try to stay calm amidst the hypervigilance reported in the media, it is important to remember that this will pass. Life will return to its usual pace, with time. If we use common sense and calm, we will better serve our communities.

This policy is based on statements from the Synod of NSW & ACT (<https://nswact.uca.org.au/communications/newsroom/guidance-on-church-practices-to-prevent-the-spread-of-covid-19/>) and the Synod of Queensland (David Gill, ucaqld.com.au/whs)