

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) response & preparation

Announcement to our congregation

17 March 2020



## Principles

### Coronavirus is a gospel issue

God is giving us a great opportunity to trust Him, no matter what happens. The world may panic, but we know personally the One who holds the whole universe in His hands and who has promised that nothing, neither death nor life, nor viruses or anyone else in all creation will be able to separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8<sup>38-39</sup>). What a privilege we have to live this out before a world in increasing turmoil.

### Coronavirus is a pastoral issue

We have a deep care and concern for the vulnerable, particularly those in our own midst, but also anyone who is our neighbour. Some in our congregation have suppressed immune systems and so are particularly susceptible to viruses. Others are particularly vulnerable simply on account of their age. Love dictates that we seek to put them ahead of ourselves and offer practical & pastoral help in whatever way we can, no matter the inconvenience to ourselves.

### Coronavirus is a developing issue

We appreciate the input we have received from various ones in the congregation; this has helped shape our advice here. Feel free to continue to give input. The situation is rapidly changing and so our response will also develop. You can expect updates to this announcement in due course. At the present time our practical response is outlined below.

## Practice

**Anyone who is at all unwell**, especially with any flu-like or fever symptoms

**Anyone who has been in close proximity to someone with the coronavirus**

**Anyone who has been overseas in the past fortnight** (as per government directions)

Please stay at home, and avail yourselves of our sermons and children's talks which are posted on our website (both audio and notes): [wpcb.org.au](http://wpcb.org.au). Also please avail yourselves of pastoral support and care available by phone and email. Our pastoral carers have been advised not to personally visit those who are unwell, on the basis of potentially becoming a carrier to other people in the congregation who are susceptible to major complications or death if they were to contract the coronavirus.

### Operating in your comfort zone

Please be assured that it is not unspiritual to exercise extra caution at such a time as this by such things as:

- spreading out in where we sit in the auditorium for worship,
- refraining from attending morning tea in the hall (it is fine to stay in the auditorium, if you prefer),
- refraining from partaking of the Lord's Supper,
- returning home soon after our worship services,
- worshipping at home – especially anyone particularly vulnerable to infection (elderly/ immune suppressed)

### Greetings

Please refrain from shaking hands. More appropriate greetings would be a fist knock, an elbow knock, or a back slap.

### Fellowship & food

Morning tea will continue to be served following morning worship and supper after evening worship. However, food will be limited to pre-packaged individual portions (assuming such are available) or something equivalent, and will be served by dedicated servers (who will wear disposable gloves).

Fellowship teas and shared meals are cancelled for the time being.

### Hygiene

Hand-sanitizer (if available) will be provided at the entrance to the auditorium and hall.

Handwashing will be encouraged by providing pump soap & bar soap at each sink, together with posters promoting effective handwashing.

People serving on the cleaning roster will be provided with disposable wipes and information on effective cleaning.

The microphones will be wiped between services.

## **Lord's supper**

We will seek to source individually packaged portions for the Lord's Supper.

Failing this, and if it still seems appropriate to be celebrating the Lord's Supper, we will put processes in place that minimise handling of the elements. People should not feel that it is unspiritual to refrain from partaking, if they so desire.

## **Offering**

People are strongly encouraged to contribute their offerings for the Lord's work electronically.

The church's bank account is "*Westminster Presbyterian Church*", BSB: 082906, Acct: 533145288. For those who prefer to contribute in cash, an offering bag will be walked around (but not passed from person-to-person).

## **Live-streaming of services**

We have asked our tech team to explore how we can live-stream our worship services and implement this as soon as it is practicable.

## **Playgroup**

Playgroup is now in recess.

## **Boys' & Girls' Brigades**

No food is to be served.

## **General awareness**

Posters will be displayed highlighting awareness of the coronavirus risk in the community.

## **Other users of our premises**

Other users of our premises (the Korean Church, ANU Focus, and special event hirers) must commit to these Practice requirements, and also immediately notify us if any of their attendees are identified as having the coronavirus.

## **Personal needs**

### **Anyone who is particularly vulnerable to infection** (the elderly or immune-suppressed)

Please let us know if you would still like to be visited. We are more than happy to do so, but we will not be at all offended if you would prefer otherwise, realising that our visit does carry some risk for you.

### **Anyone with spiritual concerns**

If you are feeling anxious or worried or have any other spiritual concerns, please contact one of our elders (Geoff, Don, Pete, Ross), and we will seek to encourage you in the Lord. If you have any questions or concerns about what is proposed in this paper, please feel free to talk to one of our elders.

### **Anyone with practical concerns**

If you are unable to source necessities (food & so forth), please contact one of our deacons (Warren, Max, Dale, Ben) for assistance.

## **Prayer**

### **For one another**

As the body of Christ and a spiritual family together, please uphold one another in prayer, that the Lord would minister to each of us comfort, courage and contentment in Him.

### **For the lost**

For those who realise that there is something wrong with a world where people die from microscopic organisms and even at one another's hands, may the Lord reveal to them that humanity was created for something better than this, and that He himself has entered this broken world, taking upon Himself its curse and suffered to redeem all who will trust Him. May He draw a great multitude to eternal life in His Son, Jesus.

### **For our health-care workers and leaders**

Pray that the Lord would be pleased to preserve and sustain those who labour self-sacrificially to care for the virus-afflicted. Pray too for our government, that God might grant them wisdom to lead in a way which ministers God's blessing to this nation, despite what we deserve, that righteousness may be exalted, sin exposed, and God's people given freedom to proclaim His name until He comes.