



ANGLICAN DIOCESE
OF TASMANIA

THE RIGHT REVEREND
DR RICHARD CONDIE
BISHOP OF TASMANIA

A Pastoral Letter – COVID 19

17 March 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Lord Jesus reigns! God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)
He is our shelter and our fortress. (Psalm 91:1-2)

These are realities that do not change in the midst of a changing and unstable world, even in the face of the global pandemic of Coronavirus COVID19. None of this has taken God by surprise. He will watch over his people, and his salvation and goodness are sure.

The Anglican Church in Tasmania is committed to being a Church *for* Tasmania. We believe that the best way for us to be for the State in the midst of the COVID19 pandemic is for us to stop meeting in large groups, including our Sunday Services. The best practice in limiting the spread of disease, and to protect our health system, is to adhere to social distancing. This means limiting the number of people with whom you come into contact.

From today, there will be no Anglican Church gatherings over 10 people, other than funerals and weddings, but even these will be limited to immediate family members only. We encourage every Anglican to work and live at home if at all possible, limiting contact with others.

This does not mean we will cease to worship, or to draw near to God. We know that we can do this on our own, saying our prayers and reading the bible. There are many ways you can do this for yourself. Your Rector can help you with a daily bible reading guide and some guidance for your prayers. The Anglican Church of Australia has morning and evening prayer on a free “App” for your phone both [android](#) and [iPhone](#), and the Diocese publishes daily prayer points on App called PrayerMate also available on [android](#) and [iPhone](#).

We will also be providing on-line worship through the live-stream of church services, or pre-recorded services. I will be leading morning prayer and preaching each week from the Cathedral and making that available on the Diocesan Website. There will also be links to live-stream and video worship services from a variety of churches across the Diocese that your Rector will point you to. We don't want anyone to miss out, so if you don't have access to a computer or a smart TV or Phone, then your Rector will arrange for you to be invited to a home to participate in the video worship with a small group of others if you are not in a high risk group. Get in touch with them if you are unsure.

In the middle of all of this change we need to care for each other. Physical isolation for the prevention of the spread of the virus is one thing, but social isolation is quite another. As the people of God, we exist to serve Him in our local communities. We should be the first to reach out to the lonely and afraid with words of comfort and hope. Why not pick up the phone and call a friend today to assure them of your continued presence in their lives? Let's look out for each other and show the love of Christ. Again, your Rector will be developing ideas about how to do this well.

One practical thing we could do, is not to join in with the panic buying of essentials from our local supermarkets. This only makes life difficult for others, especially those without much money. Rather let's think how we can donate to others for their wellbeing.

I want to encourage you not to give up faith in God, but to see this an opportunity to grow as a believer in Jesus. Please continue to give financially to support the ministry of your church, either by saving your cash gifts to give at a later date, or better still setting up a direct transfer to the church to support the work.

Would you please join me in praying:

- That the Lord will halt the spread of this disease.
- That he would teach us more of his love and goodness.
- That we will see his mighty hand working through our churches, even when we can't physically meet.
- That many would turn to Him in this crisis.
- That we would serve others in our community in a generous way.
- And for all affected by the Coronavirus, the sick and the healthy, businesses and families, the vulnerable, the medical staff, and all in our community, that they would find strength and comfort.

Please be assured of my prayers for each one of you,

Warmly in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the name, there is a short, horizontal, slightly wavy line.

The Right Revd Dr Richard Condie
Bishop of Tasmania