

# Uniting



Presbytery of

# Tasmania

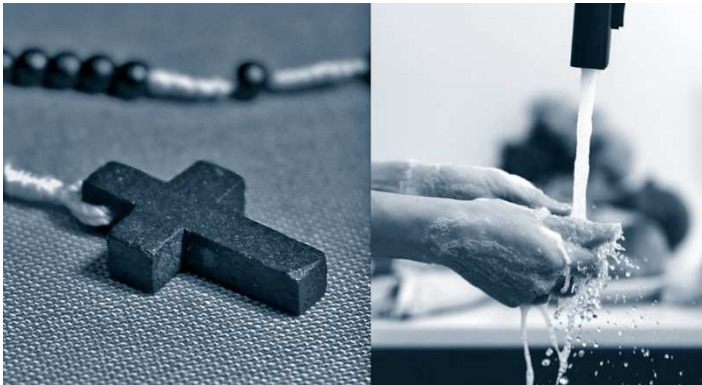


<https://ucatas.org.au/>

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## Being the Church in 'non-contact' times



We are all now aware of how rapidly the local and global situation has changed with the widespread transmission of Covid-19, now called a pandemic. Our governments are now moving swiftly to reduce the incidence and spread in our communities, learning from the experience of

other countries where critical health systems have been overwhelmed. We must continue to follow government health advice.

The Presbytery and Synod team have been in frequent contact with local leaders and ministers to ensure the temporary shut-down of church worship services follows government directions, and that pastoral care and alternative activities can be provided to all our members for these 'non-contact' times.

Despite the current challenges, and because of them, we have opportunities to show God's love for all creation in how we care for those around us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38–39), even 'mutual distancing' and temporary isolation in order to reduce the impact on the most vulnerable in our communities.

The Church has been through such challenges before, including in 1918-19 when the 'Spanish flu' closed churches for a while. This is beyond personal living memory, but our collective memory and our faith traditions including the Bible hold rich resources for faith in difficult times. During this time, we encourage you to read your Bible, pray, and reach out to others by phone. These simple practices are at the heart of our faith, and will sustain us during these times.

*Rohan Pryor – Synod Liaison Minister*

# Opportunities

## Refresh Lay Leadership Conference



*faith deferred at this time in the home?*



*to be confirmed*

## Next Presbytery Gathering

9.45am Saturday 13 June 2020

Launceston North Uniting Church

128 - 132 George Town Road, Newnham

## Code of Ethics/Safe Church

✚ Saturday 15 August – Hadspen Uniting Church

✚ Tuesday 25 August – Glenorchy Uniting Church



**Code of Ethics** 9.30am-12.30pm for Ministry Workers, Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders

**Safe Church** 1.00pm – 4.00pm for everyone

**Safe Church Training is** for anyone who has not yet attended a Safe Church session or one since 2017. All those in designated leadership positions are **required to attend** and others with Working with Vulnerable People Cards are **encouraged to attend**.

## Uniting Tasmania Editor

Are you interested in putting together monthly *Uniting Tasmania* editions on a short or long term basis? Please contact the Uniting Tas Office (6331 9784) or [tas.office@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:tas.office@victas.uca.org.au) and ask what's involved.

## *“Being God's People in the face of COVID-19”*

I'm sure that, by now, most of us are seriously tired of hearing about the COVID-19 Coronavirus. My apologies to those who are suffering from coronavirus fatigue but, given the “luck of the draw” on the roster for these “Living Faith” articles, it's my turn to write the article this week.

Given the need for us to practice “physical distancing” (and for some to even practice “self-isolation” or “quarantine”), the question now is “How can we be God's people in the face of COVID-19?” I'm not a public health expert, but I do have some background in pastoral theology and church life. So, here goes.

**Take the situation seriously.** Coronavirus denial is as serious as climate change denial, Holocaust denial, Stolen Generation denial, antivaxxerism, etc.

**Get accurate information.** Get your facts from reliable sources such as the ABC or the SBS. Double-check information from more sensationalised sources; rumours and conspiracy theories abound in times like these.

**Do the practical things that are being recommended.** This includes frequent hand-washing and practicing “mutual distancing” to show mutual care.

**Don't panic.** This is self-evident. But reduce anxiety for others by your care.

**Keep your sense of humour.** Also, self-evident. Enjoy sunshine, flowers, life.

**Keep an eye out for those more vulnerable than yourself.** This is affecting everyone. Those more vulnerable than yourself (either physically, emotionally, or socially) need your support.

**Make the most of the need for “mutual distancing” or even “self-isolation”.** Regard it as an extended spiritual retreat, if necessary.

**Realise that some of us react differently to others about social distancing in worship.** Some feel impoverished by not being able to touch your fellow-worshippers before, during, and after worship. For others, it can be a breath of fresh air. I personally will miss doing the Asian-style “Namaste” greeting during the Passing of the Peace and at the church door after the crisis is over.

**If gathered worship in your congregation needs to be cancelled for a few weeks, realise that this will affect some of us in different ways.** Those with an essentially teaching-learning approach to worship will regard missing worship for a few Sundays as the equivalent to wagging school. Those with an essentially sacramental approach to worship will regard it like skipping a meal.

I hope this was helpful.

*by Bob Faser (ed.)*



## Leadership Formation

Some helpful tools for your community to care for one another at this time are available:

**Being Proactively Pastoral God is with us - always** - the promises of God in the Bible remind us that we are never alone. We can be in a crowd of people of by ourselves, God will always be with us.

**Carry hope in all circumstances** - Life will always have difficult and trying circumstances. Faith in God enables us to carry hope in these times. It is hope that enables us to see beyond what troubles us and look to God's holding.

**Be a calm presence for another** - some of our communities are growing in anxiousness. A calm presence can do much to open us to hear the world differently. We can find solutions to problems when our nervous system is not on high alert. Being a calm presence will help everybody find a way through. A calm presence helps us make sense of where we are and what we are doing.

**Take extra steps to be there** - some people will experience great hardship, physically, economically, emotionally. A phone call with each other helps people stay connected when contact is limited. An email, a video message are others way we can be with each other, when we can't share space as we normally have. We can work out in our faith communities, who will stay in contact with who, providing networks of care. If we can, we can help bring provisions to others who are isolated too.

**Listen from a place of love** - When we take time and give our attention to the other we are listening from a place of love. Letting people share their difficult emotions, their sadness or even joy let's them know they are loved and valued any time. We all have a story to share. Someone's story may just be a gift for us to receive and carefully hold for a moment.

**Pray together** - Praying opens us to God's presence with us. Whether we pray together over the phone, through online means or across the back fence, we are giving ourselves to God and being touched by God in a unique and intimate way. We don't have to lots of fancy words. Let what is in your heart come out. You may not need many words at all. Silence is a great space for simply letting yourselves be with God.

*Denise Savage, Presbytery Minister for Leadership Formation*

*If you would like Denise to listen and share around leadership formation, contact Denise 0427 647 395 or [denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au)*

## Prayer for Sunday 29 March 2020

Dear loving Father God, your world is broken and hurting.  
Hear our prayer. Let our cry be heard by you!  
Show us the way in our darkness and distress,  
in our confusion, fear and aloneness;  
in our anger that our world is turned upside down  
and we don't know which way is up.



God, we pray for our leaders in governments  
and places where decisions are being made  
that affect so many vulnerable people.  
Grant them sensitivity, insight, courage, love and wisdom  
for the tasks they are called to fulfil.

As Germans sing to each other from their balconies,  
help us to find creative ways to love one another  
in our isolation.

Use us to bring your peace into a hurting world  
Use our tears to water the barren deserts in our hearts,  
in our communities, and in our land.  
Use us to sow seeds of love, and hope,  
so that peace and joy may be born again.

Living Christ, who came to us with a cry in the night,  
and died with a cry on the cross, hear our cry!  
Hold us in our darkness and pain  
and lead us through to resurrection joy! Amen

*Rev Adelene Mills*

### WORD OF MISSION



May God our Creator renew in us the creative Spirit  
that brings healing and life to all creation.

May Jesus the Christ, sustain us in boundless grace  
and love

May the Holy Spirit fill us with courage to be bearers  
of God's hope in the world, Amen.

*Taken from A Pastoral Response to the  
Pandemic by Dr Deidre Palmer*

For the full Pastoral Response: [A Pastoral Response to the Pandemic](#)



This  
'n  
That

■ **Uniting Women 2020** in Darwin from Thursday July 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday July 12<sup>th</sup> at Cl...al Resort, Lee Point, Darwin. **cancelled** check out <https://unitingwo...> why not apply for a Presbytery Go Grant if you are interested?

■ **Worship Resources by the Bundle** Brian Cole will not be sending out any Worship Resources beyond the end of May 2020 (retirement beckons!).

He has received a few requests for a spread of Worship Resources covering the 3 year RCL Cycle - Years A, B, and C.

■ Lay Preachers and other local worship leaders who would like to receive discs of Brian's Worship Resources for 2017 (Year A), 2018 (Year B) and/or 2019 (Year C) may contact Lance Cowled, who has a copy of this material and, with Brian Cole's permission can make a copy for any person who wants it. Please order by end of February or order after the beginning of April. [Lance.cowled@hotmail.com](mailto:Lance.cowled@hotmail.com) or phone 62723096 [answering machine]

### An idea for what you can do at home during this time...

Create a space where you can place something that reminds you of the community of faith to which you belong – a bible, a cross or another symbol. If you don't have a cross, you might like to draw one for your space. Each day write out a favourite verse from the Bible and leave it present as you go throughout life in your daily living.

If you or your congregation would like to share your stories of being church differently at this time with others, please let us know at the UCA Tasmanian Office [tas.office@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:tas.office@victas.uca.org.au) or at PO Box 1076 Launceston 7250

## Congregational Checklist for April

- Annual reports, including reports from ministers, chairpersons, various church activities, financial statements to be sent to UCA Tasmanian Office
- Review of Safe Church Policies
- Notify UCA Tasmanian Office of any changes to Presbytery Directory – office bearers, worship times etc.

# Praying for the Everyone

1 Corinthians 13:8 ff (ed.) *Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part ... For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

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## Resources for UCA congregations in 'non-contact' times

Facebook and the Internet are flooded with resources and ideas for church communities in 'non-contact' times. On the Presbytery of Tasmania website Resources page (<https://ucatas.org.au/resources-for-non-contact-times/>) you will find resources selected by the UCA leaders in Tasmania, for live-stream worship, alternative activities, ways to remain connected, and to ensure effective pastoral care.



- **Digital and Online Options**
- **At Home ideas**
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Communication from Presbytery, Synod and Assembly leadership**
- **Links to (many) other resources**

Please contact the UCA Tasmanian Office if we can assist with printing or mailing of any resources you or your congregation require.

## what's On

### April

Fri 10		Good Friday (UCA Tas Office closed. Reopens Tues 14 April)
Thur 23	10.00	Presbytery Standing Committee
Mon 27	10.30am	Resource & Development Committee

### May

Tues 5	10.00am	Pastoral Relations Committee, Launceston
Thur 14	10.00am	Presbytery Standing Committee, Launceston
Mon 25	10.30am	Resource & Development Committee, Launceston

Please check our Presbytery Calendar of events on the [Presbytery website](#)

## Updates April 2020:

**Journey - Youth.Faith.Leadership** and **Easter Youth Camp** have been deferred at this time.

**Crossroads** AGM scheduled for 28 March has been postponed to a later date TBA; annual Holiday Weekend has been postponed from 17-19 April to 16-18 October 2020; the 3 Crossroads groups in Tas have cancelled their meetings until further notice.

**Thirsty Ground** visit to Longford UC Saturday 28th March 2020 has been cancelled

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