

18 August 2020

To all Clergy, Secretaries and Diocesan Councillors

### **COVID-19 Update 10**

Dear Friends in Christ,

The State Government is introducing some new measures that will help South Australia keep the risk of COVID-19 spreading low so that in turn there will be a reduced risk of new restrictions being needed. From Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August, places of worship **must** have a COVID Marshal assigned. They will need to be on duty for services, ceremonies and events, but not outside of these occasions (i.e. if the church building is open for prayer but there is no service occurring). It is important to note that this does not include weddings or funerals. However, weddings and funerals do need a COVID Marshal if food and beverages are purchased and consumed during or around these events.

The capacity for our services would generally be 200 people or less, so we will need to have a nominated COVID Marshal. This means that we can nominate one of our regular worshippers (most likely a Warden) and they can perform the role of COVID Marshal in addition to conducting his or her usual duties.

I have attached the “COVID Marshal Frequently Asked Questions” sheet with this letter, but would still like to highlight the following relevant points.

- A COVID Marshal will be required to complete the relevant training as prescribed by SA Health. This will be a quick and easy online course, offered at no cost. The training can be accessed via this link <https://marshal.clickontraining.com.au/>
- COVID Marshals must be visibly and immediately identifiable by people, generally by wearing, holding or otherwise having something that makes it obvious that they are the COVID Marshal.
- The COVID Marshal must be on duty while a service or activity is being conducted.
- A COVID Marshal’s role is to ensure that the site’s COVID-Safe Plan is implemented as best as possible and to try to ensure that all other people on site comply with the rules contained in these plans, such as physical distancing, capacity limits, infection control and hygiene rules. For us, this also includes maintaining the accuracy of attendance records.

I also attach with this letter a fact sheet giving advice for Religious and Faith Communities. This was published in late July but we have only been made aware of it in the last week. Most of the advice is familiar however there seems to be a change around congregational singing from the previous advice the Premier had given. At the moment the advice from the Deputy Chief Public Health Officer (and it is only advice, not a direction) is that in terms of risk mitigation, it is better not to have congregational singing since singing involves greater expiration of breath than normal speaking and therefore has more potential for the virus to be spread if it is present.



The office for public health is doing some further investigation on this to provide clarification or other options for congregational singing, but for now I suggest that until we get further advice, you simply use your common sense. Up until now we have been singing, and no problems that we are aware of have been forthcoming, but this is not to say it won't happen in the future. I am aware that the Archbishop of Adelaide is making further enquiries as well, and as of Friday last week was not minded to ban singing in our churches.

To help keep all of the current regulations and directives straight in our minds, I reiterate the following points;

#### Weddings/Funerals/Private Gatherings in homes

There is a cap of 100 people for weddings and funerals although we still need to consider the density rule in conjunction with this cap. At any one time, you are permitted to have 10 visitors in addition to those that live at a private residence. The maximum number of people permitted at private residences at any one time for a private gathering is 20 people, although the capacity allowed in a private residence is still subject to the 1 person per 2 square metres rule.

#### Density Rule

The density requirements for indoor spaces are currently set at 1 person per 2 square metres. There is no set maximum of people that are allowed to be in a space (asides from weddings and funerals above), it will be completely defined by this density rule and the size of your worship space. We are still being strongly encouraged to practice physical distancing of 1.5 metres wherever and whenever possible.

#### COVID-Safe Plan

Religious Ceremonies are classed as a "Defined public activity" and so we still need to have a COVID-Safe Plan completed and it should be available on your premises. Those that have already completed a COVID-Safe plan will not need to complete another one, the Government will email updated versions of your existing plan as changes come in to force. If you do not yet have a COVID-Safe plan then you must complete one before face-to-face services can recommence. The link to create a COVID-Safe plan and more information is available on the Government's website; <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery/create-a-covid-safe-plan>

#### Contact Tracing Records

It is still necessary to keep a record of all the people who attend your services or activities. For convenience I again attach the form the Government has produced to assist with this recording, but very simply we need to note the date, the person's name, the time, and a means of contact (ie. a phone number) should contact tracing be necessary. It is important that all Contract Tracing Records are kept in a secure location after the occasion that they have been obtained. They should then be destroyed after 30 days – not simply put in the bin.

#### Singing and Hymn Books

The SA Government has not banned singing during worship as other states and countries have, however they are now encouraging that we maintain a social distance of greater than 1.5m between people while singing. As I have said above, please use your common sense. If you are going to have signing, handling a hymn book by one person is fine but they can't be passed from person to person, so they can't be handed out at the door. This also applies to bibles and prayer books or service sheets. Once used, they mustn't be touched by anyone else for a week. That means if there is more than one service on a Sunday, the books that have already been used cannot be used in subsequent ones.

### The Collection

Taking a collection during a service is fine but the plate should not be passed from person to person. If possible, the plate should be available for people to use on their way into or out of the service – not on the way up for Communion. People counting money should use gloves and ensure that they wash their hands. If people have been able to give electronically over the last few months, they should be encouraged to continue to do so.

### Passing of the Peace

To continue maintaining our social distance there should still be NO passing of the peace during the service. The phrase, “the Lord be with you” should simply be responded to with “and also with you.” Similarly, any greeters/welcomers should not be shaking hands when people arrive, and neither should the Priest at the conclusion of the service.

### Holy Communion

Communion continues to only be permitted in one kind – the wafer. There is no indication when the regulations concerning the common cup at Communion will differ but we will keep an eye out for any changes.

### Morning Tea

I am still happy for morning teas to be held after services. Food and drink should be single served portions and avoid shared portions from communal containers. It is also important that people do not share utensils so this should be considered.

### Cleaning after services and other gatherings

This should be continued as recommended by the authorities and outlined in your COVID-Safe plans.

We have been hearing this message for a number of months now, but please remain vigilant and continue to do your part within our communities. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser frequently, sneeze or cough into your elbow, maintain a physical distance from people outside of your household, and if you are feeling unwell then please stay at home.

With continuing prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by the name 'Keith' and a stylized flourish.

The Right Reverend Keith Dalby  
Bishop of The Murray