

16 July 2021

To all Clergy, Secretaries and Diocesan Councillors

COVID-19 Update 19

Dear Friends in Christ,

Once again, the South Australian Government has decided to take pre-emptive action to keep our state safe and strong given the latest outbreaks of Covid-19 in other states. As of 12:01am this morning, 16th July, restrictions have been reintroduced in. They are very similar to the restrictions that were reinstated last month, but please read through the information below to be sure that you are aware of the requirements.

Density Rule

The density requirements have returned to 1 person per 2 square metres of space for all defined public activities and gatherings. We can have a maximum of 75% capacity if masks are worn. Also remember that people should attempt to keep their physical distance from other members of the public (1.5m), however, this does not apply to people who live together, who are friends or family members, or people who regularly associate with each other.

Masks

Wearing face masks is mandatory in high risk settings such as health care facilities, Residential Aged Care Facilities, allied health, and when providing personal care. It remains a recommendation to wear a mask when out in public if you are unable to physically distance. People would be encouraged to provide their own masks.

Singing

Once again, there should be no singing during any of our services. The only exception is if there is one person performing. It is still possible to have music playing, as long as people are aware that it is for reflective purposes only. Another option could be to read the hymns like poetry.

COVID-Safe Plan

Religious Ceremonies, weddings and funerals are classed as “defined public activities” and so we must have a COVID-Safe Plan. Existing plans will be updated automatically and emailed out by the Government as changes come in to force. *Remember, the current plan must be available on your premises.* If you do not yet have a COVID-Safe plan for an activity, the link to create one and more information is available on the Government’s website;

<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery/create-a-covid-safe-plan>



COVID Marshals

Some activities require a COVID Marshal to be present as outlined in your COVID-Safe Plans. Religious services are required to have a COVID Marshal on duty. People can complete the relevant online training as prescribed by SA Health, at no cost via this link; <https://marshal.clickontraining.com.au/>

COVID SAfe Check-in and Contact Tracing

The COVID SAfe Check-in was introduced to enhance contact tracing and a unique QR code is issued as part of your COVID-Safe Plan. The QR code needs to be printed and displayed prominently so that when people arrive at a venue, they can check in by scanning the QR code using their smart phone through the mySA Gov app. Remember that this applies for worship spaces, halls and/or op-shops. If people don't have the app they can use their smart phone camera and a secure web form will open to check in.

If people don't have a smart phone then paper recording can still be used as a back-up. Continue to note the date and time of the activity along with the person's name and contact details. All paper Contract Tracing Records must still be 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.

Remember that it is important to encourage all who attend our premises to check-in. Asides from the fines that can be issued for not complying, if someone tests positive to Covid-19, the COVID SAfe Check-In enables SA Health to quickly contact others who may have been exposed to the virus and help to stop the spread.

Weddings and Funerals

The maximum attendance permitted at a wedding or funeral is 150 people if held at a private place. In all locations, the 1 person per 2 square metres rule still applies.

Aged Care Facilities

Restrictions on visitors to Aged Care facilities may vary from site to site so please check with the facility before making any pastoral visits. Masks will be mandatory as noted above.

Holy Communion

The sharing of utensils, i.e. the common cup, is NOT permitted at this time.

Passing of the Peace

There should 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.

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. People counting money should use gloves and ensure that they wash their hands. Continue to encourage people to give electronically where they are able.

Morning Tea

Morning tea may be held after services but all food and drink should be single served portions and not shared portions from communal containers. It is also important that people do not share utensils so this should be considered. People should be seated to consume any food or beverages.

Cleaning after services and other gatherings

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

Please continue to follow the other Covid-safe principles as well – washing or sanitising your hands regularly and staying home and seeking testing if you are feeling unwell. I also encourage all people within the Diocese to take up the offer of a Covid-19 vaccination when they become eligible. Getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. I am having my second dose tomorrow. To check your eligibility and make a booking, visit the Australian Government Department of Health website: www.health.gov.au

With every blessing,

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