

Golden Grove Uniting Church

Pastoral Letter

13/06/20

Dear friends in Christ,

As you might be aware the current measures relating to COVID-19 social restrictions are rapidly changing for the better and some additional relaxations on restrictions relating to worship gatherings have recently been announced. While the current stage 2 restriction relaxations allow for slightly more people to gather, it is still not a total relaxation of COVID measures and additionally, is still quite far from the “normal” we used to know.

Just yesterday (12 June) the SA Government released a new roadmap to easing restrictions, the first of which would come into effect on 19 June, known as Stage 2-Plus, which promises to allow for more people to be gathered at our church. The government’s roadmap also shows another round of easing of restrictions, due as soon as 29 June.

As a congregation we should anticipate that for the near future, some form of social restrictions will continue to impact the way we gather for worship activities, which may last until a vaccine is freely available.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of how the **current stage 2 restrictions** impact all activities conducted at our church premises in relation to the COVID-Safe Plan the church council had to complete and submit to the South Australian Government this past week. Please refer to the end of this letter for specific details surrounding current SA Government requirements relating to gatherings at our church.

In relation to our church’s COVID-Safe Plan and the current stage 2 restrictions, we are able to have face to face gatherings at the church, but in a severely regulated manner with quite stringent requirements relating to hygiene, cleanliness and social distancing. The number permitted to gather currently is capped at 20 people per room.

The main reasons for the church council’s cautious approach to re-opening all church activities right away would be the amount of COVID-Safe measures we would currently need to comply with during Stage 2, the rapidly changing landscape relating to easing of restrictions (nearly weekly changes at the moment) and primarily our concern for the safety and wellbeing of our congregation.

The status of congregational activities at our church are as follows:

Activity	Status
Sunday Morning Services	Remains suspended at this time
Sunday Evening Services	Remains suspended at this time
Café Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the early stages of resuming• Conversations are taking place between the role players to enable this activity to resume in compliance with the current COVID-Safe Plan
Kidz Connect & Creche	Remains suspended at this time
Bible Study Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraged to continue to meet via Zoom video conferencing for the time being• Contact a group convener if you would like to join or if you need help joining a group online• Groups wishing to meet in person at private residences for official church activities are required to submit a COVID-Safe plan to the SA Government and the plan has to be completed by the owner of the venue due to liability implications. These groups would also still need to comply with the SA government requirements of record keeping for contact tracing, social distancing and ensuring the venue meets the current indoor space requirements.
Men’s Breakfast	Meeting in person at Soul Food Cafe, contact Trevor Walker
KYB	In recess for the moment
The Dinner Table	Remains suspended at this time

Mainly Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the early stages of discussing the feasibility of resuming in light of current restrictions and COVID-Safe requirements.
Estia Worship Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the early stages of considering the feasibility of resuming in light of current restrictions and COVID-Safe requirements • A separate COVID-Safe plan based on the facilities at Estia would be required, prior to activities recommencing
Mission & Wider Work Lunches	Remains suspended at this time
Working Bees	May be resumed, based on current COVID-Safe guidelines
Any other group gatherings on the church property	Any group that wishes to gather at the church premises are encouraged to make contact with the church council and will be required to adhere to the current GGUC COVID-Safe plan.

We will continue to record and stream worship services, that can be viewed from 10am on Sunday mornings, and any time after that, via the church website, YouTube channel, or Facebook:

<https://www.goldengroveuniting.org.au>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrn0JqYOdM3n3zxp2yUVj-A>

<https://www.facebook.com/goldengroveuniting/>

If you would like a DVD copy of the service, please advise us, and we can arrange that for you. (8251 4298; office@goldengroveuniting.org.au)

If you need help, or would like to speak or pray with anyone, please feel free to contact your Pastoral Carer, or one of the Elders or Church Council members, or our Minister (0467 683 333).

As a church council we are committed to safely resume our church activities within the guidelines of Synod and local government. We continue to meet regularly to assess which congregational activities are able to safely take place and we endeavour to keep you informed along the way. A difficult road lies ahead, but it is one we can walk together, hand-in-hand supporting each other, with Jesus at the front.

Blessings in Christ,
The Golden Grove Uniting Church Council



(For the Church Council)

Please refer to the next page for specifics regarding our church's current COVID-Safe Plan. It contains details of the measures the SA Government requires us to comply with during Stage 2, which is currently in effect.

All activities to be held at our church premises must adhere to the current Stage 2 COVID-Safe Plan, which entails the following:

1. Clarification was obtained from Synod regarding the participation of vulnerable people in church activities. Vulnerable people are defined as:
 - Those over 70 years old,
 - Those over 60 with a chronic health condition,
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 years old with a chronic medical condition, and
 - People with compromised immune systems.
2. If you are unwell, do not attend any activities at the church.
3. Vulnerable people (as defined above) are strongly advised to seek medical advice and to speak to their families regarding their intent to participate in face to face group gatherings. This advice is intended as a recommendation to ensure the safety of all involved.
 - a. Those that are eighty-years old and above are allowed to attend activities at the church but are not allowed to run such activities at this time.
 - b. Within these guidelines, each person is requested to evaluate his/her own circumstances and decide what is appropriate for them regarding when to partake in group gatherings in terms of the risks posed to their own health and the risk they pose to others.
4. Where possible, all activities at the church are recommended to be kept under two hours duration.
5. At the church premises, separate entrance and exit points are required. Signage will be posted and hand sanitiser must be made available at the entrance.
6. Contact tracing requirements. All attendees will be requested to sign into and out of the building to aid the health department in tracing those who were present, should an incident occur. The church council is responsible for safe keeping of these contact tracing lists.
7. Social distancing. All people, except those that share a household, are required to remain at least 1.5m apart at all times.
8. Indoor spacing requirements. Current restrictions require that 4m² floor space is available for each person in attendance. The maximum amount of people per room is also capped at 20 people, regardless if the room is larger than 80m² and furthermore the total amount of people on the premises is capped at 80 in any combination of rooms.
9. Based on the restrictions and sizes of rooms at the church those currently are:
 - a. Sanctuary - 20 people excluding staff (even though the room is 101m²)
 - b. Hall & Sunday School - 20 people excluding staff (even though the room is 180m²)
 - c. Meeting Room – 6 people excluding staff (the room is only 6m²)
 - d. The total people our church is authorised to have on premises in any combination of rooms indoors is 76, excluding staff.
10. Outdoor areas allow for up to 50 people in the garden/play area, up to 50 people in the car park or up to 50 in the front rose garden. The total amount of people outdoors may not be allowed to exceed 80 people in total. If people are gathered indoors and outdoors the maximum is still 80 in combination.
11. No food may be consumed on the premises at this time, this includes tea and coffee. The consumption of water from each person's own personal water bottle is permitted.
12. Cleaning requirements. It is vital that each group receives clean facilities and that the facilities are cleaned after each use. The church is currently desperately short on cleaning volunteers and the council requests that each group making use of the church facilities clean that part of the facilities they used, especially touch points such as door handles, table surfaces and chairs.
13. The church's current COVID-Safe plan will be made available on the church website as well as a physical copy on the church hall notice board.
14. These measures must be adhered to until replaced by the COVID-Safe Plus plan, which will be submitted to the SA Government in due course.