

# DIOCESAN COVID-19 UPDATE

## 13 May 2020



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DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

Dear Brothers and Sisters

The latest news and information  
from the Diocese.

This issue includes:

- Archbishop Philip's video for this week
- Government rule changes
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### Archbishop Philip's video for this week

"Green shoots in a time of adversity", this week's video, is [here](#).

### Government rule changes

The Premier made it clear on Monday that, while small religious services may resume, in general people ought to remain at home, leaving only for certain reasons. He repeated 'safe, cautious, appropriate'.

Everything in our church buildings needs social distancing, hand sanitiser on entry and exit, an attendance register, and regular and recorded church cleaning. Details follow.

### Private prayer in churches

Churches can be used for private prayer with social distancing. Hours of opening need to be set and someone responsible must be on site for security, cleaning and to ensure a limit of ten people at any one time. Cleaning needs to happen frequently. This is not an occasion for congregating socially. Any personal interaction must observe social distancing, be for a short time only and preferably be outdoors.



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## Services in churches

Church services with no more than ten congregants are allowed. In addition, the minimum number of people reasonably required to lead the service can be present. We assume that such services are mostly led by just one person. These services could include baptisms, confirmations, prayer meetings, or a service of special need. Medical advice suggests that choirs and choral/singing groups are risky; so we do not encourage their involvement yet. Avoid using common prayerbooks, Bibles, etc. No sharing of the common cup or intinction for a communion service. We suggest keeping services short as the virus is much more likely to spread indoors with sustained contact. There ought to be no congregating or refreshments before or after.

A contact list of all attending must be maintained. We suggest inviting parishioners to book in advance to attend. Once ten people are present, anyone else arriving must be refused entry. We suggest having somebody responsible for this. Indeed, we encourage each parish to appoint a Parish COVID Officer to oversee and record attendances registers, ensure cleaning and that the restrictions in general are upheld.

If there is more than one such service in a day, a full hour is needed from the end of one to the beginning of the other, and the church must be cleaned in that time. Please keep a logbook to record the cleaning of the church for the foreseeable future (as you might see in public restrooms or McDonalds is fine).

You may like to consider a 'house church' model where a priest takes communion to a house or the household arranges to attend church for a brief communion service.

Anybody who is not fully well cannot attend a church for private prayer or a service.

The DHHS full statement is found [here](#)

## Video and livestreaming

The maximum number of people for livestreaming or video purposes is now 10, all socially distanced but all integral to the needs of producing the video/livestream.

## Weddings

Weddings can now have a maximum of ten guests, plus the bridal couple and celebrant. A contact list of all attending must be maintained. Social distancing must be maintained. Musicians need to be counted among the ten guests according to our understanding of the advice.



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## Funerals

Indoor funerals in churches or funeral parlours can have a maximum of 20 mourners. Outdoor funerals can have up to 30 mourners, plus those running and leading the funeral. A contact list of all attending must be maintained. Social distancing must be maintained.

## Groups

Community support meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, men's behaviour change groups, parent groups and youth groups can meet in halls with social distancing.

## Op shops

Op shops remain closed for the time being.

## Annual leave

Under the Parish Governance Act, annual leave is negotiated between churchwardens, vicar (and other staff). Clergy and lay staff are entitled to 4 weeks a year. For full time clergy this is 24 days a year. All annual leave is to be registered on the appropriate form to the bishop's PA and to payroll. Monthly payslips indicate the amount of annual leave accrued.

Because of the pandemic, it is appropriate to make a few comments. While clergy can be required to take annual leave, which is a certainly true under the terms of JobKeeper, our advice is:

- (i) It is fair for clergy to retain one year's allocation (4 weeks) of annual leave beyond the end of the pandemic. The best advice on wellbeing suggests that at some time down the track after the pandemic a decent holiday is invaluable.
- (ii) Requiring annual leave to be taken may be appropriate when there is a large amount accrued and/or the amount of ministry able to be done is small during the lockdown.
- (iii) There may be cases when a parish's difficult financial situation also suggests taking enforced annual leave is helpful for the parish.
- (iv) If there are problems negotiating this matter, please speak with your bishop.

## Child Safety

A new warning by Amanda Lincke about the rise in grooming children during lockdown is on our website. Please [click here](#).

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### Webinars

#### ***Connecting points beyond Sunday (repeat)***

Friday, 15 May, 10am-11am.

<https://zoom.us/j/94373377019>

Much of our time is spent preparing for Sunday services. Empower your community to extend God's love in practical and creative ways through the week by utilising the technology at their fingertips.

#### ***Ridley College webinars***

- Using Ikea lights for your sermon videos: 14 May, 8pm
  - COVID-19 and the effect on Christian aid: 21 May, 8pm
- See [this link](#) for more information and to register.

#### ***Webinar: COVID-19 Learning for Thriving Churches***

Thursday, 21 May, 10am

[Click here](#) to register.

In this workshop, we will explore three digital and team resources that can help our churches thrive through Covid-19 and into the future:

1. Online strategies to share stories of God's goodness
2. Investing in tech champions and the next generation
3. System strategies to support your ministry

With our prayers for God's abundant grace,

The Archbishop and bishops.