

Coronavirus COVID-19 Update

25 March 2020 – 5.30pm

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Decisions made yesterday evening by the National Cabinet mean additional changes to the restrictions on places of worship and public gatherings from midnight tonight, 25 March. They are as follows:

Weddings can be conducted but are limited to five (5) people only – the couple, the celebrant and two (2) witnesses. The required hygiene and social/physical distancing are to be followed.

Funerals can now be held with no more than 10 people in attendance. The social/physical distancing rules apply.

Outdoor gatherings

The Prime Minister's words are 'if you are gathering together in a group, say 10 people together, outside in a group, that's not ok'. Parishes may not hold outdoor gatherings.

Working from home

People should work from home where possible. Many in the Diocesan Office are doing this. The Anglican Community Fund remains open to clients wishing to come to the office.

Bishops Kate and Jeremy are working from home as much as possible. Parish clergy and lay staff should now have their arrangements in place which allow for this.

We have received a number of questions. I hope this will help answer them:

1 Parish Council Meetings

Parish council meetings can no longer be held face-to-face and should be conducted using teleconferencing, Skype, Zoom, Google Meet or similar technology.

Frequency of meetings: Section 19.2 of the Parish Governance Statute states 'The parish council must meet at least quarterly at such times and places as the Rector and parish council determine'. Most parish councils will want to keep more regular meetings to assess and plan for the situation in their parishes, however it may be that some, especially rural parishes, will meet less frequently.

2 The Annual Meeting

The Parish Governance Statute states in section 30.1 that 'The annual meeting just be held during the months of May or June each year'.

Questions have been raised about this. Section 34.1 of the Statute allows for the Archbishop 'to direct that a special meeting of enrolled members be held . . .'

Given the current Government restrictions, any parish unable to hold its Annual Meeting in May or June will be able to hold a special meeting of enrolled members later in the year to transact any business that would normally be transacted at the annual meeting. At the appropriate time please write to me.

3 ChurchSafe training days are cancelled

4 Deconsecration of St Martin in the Fields, Kensington

The Final Service and Deconsecration of St Martin in the Fields, Kensington, will take place in a closed church on Sunday 29 March 2020 at 3.00pm and will be live streamed to the Parish of South Perth's website and Facebook page.

5 Live streaming

The new restrictions mean that the live streaming or videos of services by parish clergy and lay leaders can only be undertaken by no more than five (5) people.

Could those parishes which are live streamlining please send details of how people can connect, and we will make them available through the diocesan website.

6 Financial assistance to parishes

The Diocesan Secretary and I are working with senior staff to look at ways in which parishes may receive financial assistance for those who engage stipended clergy. A proposal will go to Diocesan Council next Thursday. More details will follow that meeting.

7 Parish Loans

The Anglican Community Fund is considering this at present and will speak directly to parishes in the coming days.

8 Parish Giving

I am hearing many stories of the generosity of members of our parishes. We know too that many will be in changed circumstances. It is important that parishes have a sense of their financial situation going forward. If your parish is not using direct debit for giving, the Anglican Community Fund direct debit form can be found [here](#). Please speak to the ACF team if you are unsure how to implement this.

9 Technology Grants

It is possible to offer a grant to parishes needing to update data plans or to purchase IT hardware to enable meetings and other parish contact. Up to \$1,000 can be available. Applications should be made to the Diocesan Secretary.

10 Leave

Some clergy have made enquiries about long service leave. This may suit your needs. If you are medically or legally required to self-isolate, please contact me.

11 Pastoral Team

I have been contacted by Ms Cate Vose, Ramsay Health, asking if we have any clergy who would be willing to offer for ministry with people who are hospitalised due to COVID-

19. Hospital chaplains are already part of this ministry. If you would be willing to offer this ministry, could you please let me know. It is unclear what the criteria or other requirements would be should this come to pass.

12 Facebook

I now have a Facebook page which will be dedicated to offering support and information:

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

Regular updates will continue on the Diocese of Perth website.

I know that pastoral care, especially of the most vulnerable, is not easy at present. Please ensure all care is taken to abide by the requirements of hygiene and distancing.

Today the Church keeps the Feast of the Annunciation. The gospel reading tells of the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary. The words spoken are 'Do not be afraid'.

As we travel these days together, please hear these words for yourself, your family, your friends, your community, the world in the love of Jesus.

Peace and grace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay", with a small cross symbol to the left.

The Most Reverend Kay Goldsworthy AO | Archbishop