

From The Churchwardens

COVID-19 UPDATE AND PARISH NEWS

7 October 2020

In the Archbishop's letter to the Churchwardens this week, Archbishop Glenn stated:

“Regrettably, nothing has changed for the number of parishioners attending public worship ... I have written to the Premier indicating my grave concern that the Government is discriminating against people of faith, because places of public worship are subject to much greater restrictions compared with other public venues ... If the Premier accedes to my request, we shall be able to hold carol services for up to 300 persons, with a group of up to five singers. However, since the current Public Health Order will [now] be in force until Christmas, it will require either an exemption from the current Public Health Order or a new Public Health Order for this change to occur.”

He continues:

“The main changes [in the latest Health Orders] relate to updating our COVID-19 Safety Plan in accordance with NSW Health's approved checklist, dated 25 September 2020.

For example, a COVID-19 Safety Plan for each separate area on the premises must be developed, complied with and a copy kept on the premises. Each Safety Plan must be registered with the NSW Government.”

So — what does this mean for St John's? Firstly, although all of our facility users submit their own COVID Safety Plans for the operation of their business or activity at St John's—the Churchwardens will now need to submit a separate plan for the use of the hall, the Op Shop and the crypt or Upper Room. In particular, this will need to cover our Bible study groups, any Op Shop operations, etc. We have already started this work.

In addition (and disappointingly), it now seems unlikely that we will be able to hold a full sung Advent or Christmas carol service, although we may be able to have a larger in-person or on-line service with a small choir limited to five

choristers, suitably separated, but with no congregational singing. However, we can hope and pray that if the current zero community transmissions is maintained we may receive an exemption in time for Christmas as the Archbishop is attempting to lobby for.

Having said that—as reported last week—there are a number of exciting initiatives currently on the table to bring both our community together and to start re-establishing our financial independence from the COVID government support packages. The Wardens and Parish Council will be considering these over the next week and will keep the parish informed as to progress through this update.

Finally ...

At the risk of repetition, we would like to re-emphasise both the interest and the importance of our Thursday night on-line Bible study group with Bishop Michael. Bible study is an important facet of our developing understanding of our faith and our relationship with God and the Wardens strongly encourage you to join us in that group (via phone or on the Internet) - for our continued study of the Book of Revelation which can, by drawing the people's experience and John's teachings of the first century, only enrich and re-inforce your relationship with God during the current challenges to our community of faith.

Just let Meg in the office know to receive the notes and link / phone numbers.

The Archbishop concluded his letter perceptively as always and as follows:

“Paul encouraged Timothy to urge ‘petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.’ (1 Timothy 2:2)

May God be pleased to answer such petitions and thanksgivings as we pray for those who govern us.”

The Churchwardens

Chris Russell AM JK Seo James Winter