

17 March 2020

Dear Church

Last Sunday afternoon the Eldership met to discuss how our congregations in Belmont and Bannockburn will manage the COVID-19 pandemic. As you would be well aware the situation regarding this virus is changing daily, and the church is doing everything possible to keep everyone who attends our services safe and informed.

We are trusting for God's protection and grace at the same time as we are wanting to be wise about how we operate our normal church activities. It's important that we don't overreact in fear, but seek to be aware of the latest information and respond accordingly with appropriate measures and protections.

At this stage, we will be continuing with Sunday services unless the federal or state governments advise otherwise.

Hygiene is our priority and starting this week we are ensuring a thorough weekly clean throughout the Belmont church facility. To protect the Sunday service we have closed all programs and activities at the Belmont site to keep the venue ready for the weekend.

At both sites we will not be serving communion until we have a safe solution for distributing the elements. Also, for the time being there will be no morning tea available after the services.

We have some protocols that we would ask you to observe:

1. If you or members of your family show flu-like symptoms of heightened temperature, respiratory difficulties, runny nose, coughing or unusual aches and fatigue then please do not attend Sunday services at either site.
2. Please see a doctor to determine the cause of your illness.
3. We encourage everyone to bring their own hand sanitiser and use it regularly. We have a limited amount of hand sanitiser available for Sundays and encourage everyone to be thorough in washing hands with soap.
4. Refrain from shaking hands and kissing or hugging to minimise body contact.
5. If you are in a service and you or your children begin to cough or sneeze, please move outside or into an area where people are not in close proximity.

The Eldership will continue to monitor the situation through government authorities and will do our best to keep you informed of any change to circumstances, responses or advice.

Link to Health Dept advice:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

We are seeking to faithfully hold to two truths—the seriousness of this virus, and the supremacy of our God. Threats such as this virus demonstrate to us all that life—and plans and the supposed securities we hope in—are fragile, but our God isn't. We want our starting point in all things to be that God is our refuge and hope, and in fact, our loving Father because of Jesus. This hope will underpin all planning and precautions we put in place across our churches. We also invite you to join us in prayer for God's provision and protection for all involved in our church community, and for health workers and leaders everywhere.

Let's be prayerful, trusting and observant,

**Pastor Dave Manning:** Waurin Ponds Community Church

**Pastor Steve Abram:** Momentum Christian Centre Bannockburn

Waurin Ponds Community Church Inc Eldership:

**Simon Edwards**

**John Challis**

**Scott Fuller**

# COVID-19 Response Phases.

Observed by both Belmont and Bannockburn church sites.

## Phase 1:

Voluntary self-isolation of individuals at risk

Increased focus on hand washing and access to hand sanitisers

Symptomatic individuals wanting to attend Sunday Services are asked to stay home

Symptomatic individuals being asked to attend a doctor

Refraining from shaking hands and any other forms of body contact

## Phase 2:

Compulsory isolation of individuals at risk or symptomatic, diagnosed with or living in a household with suspected cases

Cancellation of programs and activities on the church site

Enhanced sanitation such as extra cleaning shifts to sterilise high contact surfaces (eg toilets, desks, doors and auditorium seating)

## Phase 3:

Cancellation of all programs and activities meeting off the church property

## Phase 4:

Closure of Sunday Services, triggered by:

Federal and/or State Government advise

Imminent uncontained spread of virus in our church community

Unable to keep up with supply of hygiene cleaning products

**Note: 'At Risk'** = those who have been exposed to a suspected carrier, those who travelled through an affected area or those who are displaying symptoms but are undiagnosed.