

Thursday, 29 July 2021

To: Church Council Chairpersons, Church Council Secretaries, Ministers, Minister of Pastor and the Presbytery/Synod collaboration group.

Dear Members of the Church,

Peace be with you in this time of uncertainty and restriction.

The extension of lockdown in Greater Sydney is not the news we prayed for, and yet we so highly value the health and well-being of every person. So obeying the Government restrictions becomes an act of service - to keep our community safe, we give up our freedom for a time. It doesn't mean the restrictions are any easier to live with, but it reframes them through our faith in Jesus Christ and his call to follow him, to love one another and to work for the good of others. Knowing our frustration and loneliness are not meaningless supports our resilience and ability to cope.

Thank you for being so willing to care for one another by heeding the Government restrictions. As more Local Government Areas are affected, the heartache in feeling disconnected from family and friends grows - but to hear of the wonderful work that continues is so uplifting. Kindness cupboards, food hampers and provisions of meals all make the road a little easier for so many in desperate need. Online sharing of resources has strengthened connection across congregations and supported Ministers and leaders.

In times of great stress tempers can fray and patience thin. Whether you live in extreme lockdown or the restrictions of closed borders, this is the time to offer kindness, compassion and patience.

As Synod prepares for the last stanza, the continuing experience of not being in the same room brings fresh challenge. Please pray for the Synod 2021 leaders, and know we are praying for you.

If you have any questions regarding any of the Covid-restrictions, please contact:

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We close with the encouraging words of Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan living in Ireland:

Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise,
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet,
The sky is no longer thick with fumes,
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi,
People are singing to each other across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open,
so that those who are alone,
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland,
is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples,
are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way.
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality,
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that,
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation,
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying,
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness,
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.
Yes there is even death,
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic,
The birds are singing again,
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul,
And though you may not be able to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

(Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM, March 13, 2020)

Bless you for all that you do for our church and our community.



Rev. Jane Fry
General Secretary



Rev. Simon Hansford
Moderator



Rev. Bronwyn Murphy
Associate Secretary