



Crookwell Uniting Church

“To Know Christ and Make Christ Known”



*Witnessing to God's love for the world
From the main street to the paddock.*

July 2020

Where To From Here?

As we mark three months now of being apart from one another, I have been reflecting on the countless passages from the prophets in which God instructs the people to prioritize acts of justice over acts of worship.

In Amos for example, God tells the people,

‘I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

*Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.*

*But let justice roll down like waters, and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’*

Amos 5:21-24

This theme is also found in Micah 6:6-8; Isaiah 66:1-3; Jeremiah 6:18-21; Jeremiah 7:9-10, 22-23; and Psalm 51.

In other words, it's kind of a big deal. This does not mean worship is unimportant, but God seems to be clear that the order is **first** justice and righteousness, **then** worship.

This is a helpful principle for us to keep in mind as we discuss where to next for us as a congregation.

Contact Us

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Congregation
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COVID-19 plans and the difficulty of regathering

It is clear to me that we have a moral imperative to continue to care for the most vulnerable members of our community by not rushing to regather church.

However, in addition to these ethical reasons for not yet regathering, there are several practical challenges.

The Uniting Church Synod of NSW.ACT has now produced clear guidelines, based on government rules, on what steps we need to take to gather for worship. The links to all these documents are available from <https://nswact.uca.org.au/covis19saferoadmap/> (if you don't have the internet, but would like a copy, please contact Matthew in the office on 02 4832 1026).

Church Council and the Executive have begun to look at these policies, and have acknowledged some significant challenges, including:

- The requirement to develop a separate COVID-safe plan (and a responsible person) for each ministry occurring in the Church buildings, including worship, funerals, Church Council meetings, Fellowship meetings, and WELCOME.
- The need to obey the 4 square metre rule means we could have

between 20-24 people at worship on a Sunday. Given our average attendance is 30, and over a month around 50-60 people attend worship, ***who misses out if we regather?***

- The need to keep a detailed attendance register; to avoid singing; to not have shared morning tea (and probably not communion either); to have a separate door to enter and exit by; and to have the church regularly deep-cleaned.

It is also worth noting that if we don't have these plans, or fail to stick to them, we face fines of ***at least 11,000***.

This leaves significant questions about how we manage these challenges, who is responsible for each part of the plan, etc.

Consequently, ***Church Council has agreed that we should continue not meeting in the church at least until the end of July*** (Church Council will continue to make decisions month-to-month based on where government legislation is up to, and based on advice from the Synod).

House Churches & Next Steps

That said, Church Council also recognizes the need for fellowship, and wants to look at opportunities to help all people participate in worship.

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While the rules around regathering in the Church are quite strict; as you know, the rules around having visitors to your home are a little more relaxed.

We are therefore asking ***if there might be members of the congregation (especially those who have the internet and have been able to connect into services via the website) who would be willing to host a couple of people at their house for Church on Sundays?***

Similarly, ***is there anybody (especially those without the internet) who would appreciate going to someone else's house for Church on Sundays?***

These small house church gatherings still have risks, and you will need to think about things like spacing, hand sanitizer, not attending when sick, etc. However, they are a more manageable risk than us all gathering at the church.

There is more information about this later in the newsletter. If you are interested in participating, could you please let myself or Matthew know.

In the meantime, thank you to those who have continued to give via Direct Debit or by dropping envelopes to the manse. Currently we are holding financially, and have not yet had to draw on our reserves, but with lack of clarity about how long

Government support will last, we continue to monitor the Church's finances carefully.

It has also been wonderful to hear stories of members of the congregation ringing each other and keeping an eye out for their neighbours.

God bless you all and your ministry at this time.

Yours in Christ

Daniel

We'll Meet Again

Dame Vera Lynn was referred to as the "Forces' Sweetheart" during the Second World War, as she entertained troops in Egypt, Myanmar and India; and countless others in England through her radio performances and recordings.

Vera Lynn, who passed away in June at the age of 103, was perhaps best known for her recording of *We'll Meet Again*. It was a tune that continually lifted the spirits of soldiers and the general population during the War, and was recently quoted by Queen Elizabeth II during a speech on the current pandemic.

Eighty years on, the song reminds us we can get through any adversity, and that we too will meet again. Stay safe.

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Church at Home

Although we are still unable to worship in large groups at the church, there is now an opportunity to gather in small groups for "Church at Home." Government guidelines allow for ten people to visit a home, practising social distancing.

If you would like to host "Church at Home", here are some things you may wish to consider.

- Do you have a stable internet connection?
- Are you able to connect a computer to a television?
- Do you have a DVD player?
- Do you have a screen large enough for people to see comfortably?
- Are you able to provide hand sanitiser?

If you are interested in hosting, or attending a "Church at Home" service, please contact Daniel on 0432 648 676, or Matthew on 4832 1026.

Worship & Readings

Sunday 4 July

9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

Sunday 11 July

9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19; Psalm 24; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29

Sunday 18 July

9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-14; Psalm 89:20-37; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Sunday 25 July

9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: 2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

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