# C:\Users\mossf.DANIEL-HP\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCacheContent.Word\UCA_WebColourMedium.jpg 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.*

October 2021

# Next Steps and Vaccinations

Throughout the pandemic, Church Council has sought to make its decisions based on the simple principle pf ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’

When our gathering together for worship has had the potential to risk the lives, health and safety of our neighbours, we have chosen not to gather in person, and instead looked for alternate ways of worshipping.

When it was felt we could worship together safely, we have done so, taking appropriate precautions as needed (such as masks and occasionally not singing).

In the coming weeks and months, as we enter a new phase of normal, this principle will be our guide – and to this end, I wanted to update you about the road ahead.

**Step 1: Vaccinations**

Last week, I saw footage of an anti-vaccination rally in which a person was holding up a sign saying, ‘Jesus is my vaccine.’ The implication was that this person was invoking the name of Jesus as their justification for refusing to get vaccinated.

I utterly reject such theology.

Yes, we trust our lives to Jesus. Part of living in a crisis is that we should frequently be in prayer and commending ourselves to God’s care. However, I find helpful here the words of Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther when his own town of Wittenberg was struck by the black death:

*‘I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others […]If my neighbour needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely.’*

*‘All of us have the responsibility of warding off this poison to the best of our ability because God has commanded us to care for the body, to protect and to nurse it so that we are not exposed needlessly. In an emergency, however, we must be bold enough to risk our health if that is necessary. Thus, we should be ready for both – to live and to die according to God’s will.’*

We cannot on one hand pray for God to keep us healthy, and then act against that prayer by refusing best practice steps like vaccinations and mask wearing. Likewise, we cannot pray for the safety of our neighbour, and then refuse to take all reasonable steps to keep them safe.

The principle of love of neighbour then commends to us that we should get vaccinated as long as we are able (I understand that medically there will be some of us who can’t, and that is entirely reasonable). By getting the vaccine I reduce the chances that I will spread the virus to others, and thus show love of neighbour. But I also reduce the risk of myself getting seriously ill and overwhelming the health system, and thus also show love to my neighbours who are nurses, doctors and cleaners in the hospital system.

So, the ***first step in the coming weeks is, if you are not already vaccinated, please get vaccinated as soon as you can.***

**Step 2: Regathering for worship**

The next challenge for us will be the question of how and when we regather for worship. Currently, Crookwell is not in lockdown. However, late last week traced of COVID were found in the sewerage in Crookwell, suggesting there may be undiagnosed cases in town. For this reason, and also due to our proximity to Goulburn (where there are a number of confirmed cases) Church Council has decided not yet to return to in-person worship.

In addition, we know that the Government’s roadmap to opening up suggests that while we will be allowed to regather for worship once NSW hits 70% double vaccinations, this freedom will only be for those who are double vaccinated.

This presents significant ethical problems for us as a church, that Church Council is currently considering, using a discussion paper from Rev Dr Rob McFarlane which I have attached to this newsletter for your own reflections.

Further to these ethical dilemmas, there are a number of practical questions we still don’t have answers to (e.g. what will vaccine passports look like, how are we to manage attendance, what will new COVID plans need to look like?)

We know also that not all our members have yet had equal opportunity to access the vaccine, and we wish to give everyone a chance to do so before we regather.

***For these reasons, Church Council has decided we will not worship together in person during the month of October. We will continue worshipping at home and online for this month. Our hope is that we will regather in person for All Saints (the first Sunday in November).***

But this does depend heavily on what the Government’s 80% roadmap looks like (which they have yet to reveal).

**Step 3: In the meantime**

So, for October, we will continue much as we have been, with a couple of exceptions. For those worshipping online, this Sunday 3 October, Rev. Dr. John Miller from Goulburn will be leading worship via Zoom at 9am. I will attempt to stream the Zoom service to our website (crookwelluniting.org) as normal, but you can participate more fully by joining via Zoom. (A Similar arrangement may be in place for Sunday 31 October).

The Zoom details are:

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/92557184742?pwd=S2E2eGVoZWNsdEsvcTNjSWRqZFkyUT09>

If the link does not work, open Zoom on your device and enter the following meeting.

ID and passcode.​

Meeting ID: 925 5718 4742​

Passcode: 492670

Further, on Sunday 24 October at 2pm, you are invited to join a special online service to mark the 150th anniversary of the Goldsmith Street Church in Goulburn. Details to follow.

Finally, you will find included in the prayer pack for this month, a special liturgy of the empty cup, as a communion alternative for us all while we aren’t gathered in person.

Other than this, continue to worship with us online or by yourself at home as you have been doing.

Please know you are all in my prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Daniel

# Worship & Readings

**Sunday 3 October**

9:00amcrookwelluniting.org

Readings: Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

**Sunday 10 October**

 9:00am crookwelluniting.org

Readings: Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

**Sunday 17 October**

 9:00am crookwelluniting.org

Readings: Job 38:1-7; Psalm 104:1-9, 24; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

**Sunday 24 October**

 9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Psalm 34:1-8; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

**Sunday 31 October**

9:00 crookwelluniting.org

Readings: Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

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# Goulburn Church Turns 150

Sunday, October 24th will see a special online service to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Goulburn Uniting Church building in Goulburn.

The original chapel was built in 1848, but as Goulburn grew, plans for a new church building were approved in 1869, and completed in 1871 under the leadership of Rev. Bernard Kenny.

The original organ was built in 1886 by Wadsworth Brothers of Manchester, and installed two years later. It was rebuilt in 1956, but has since fallen into disrepair, as new electronic organs came into fashion.

