

Q How will we know about further updates?

We have established a Synod Crisis Management Team which monitors changes on a daily basis. Compliance and Pastoral advice will continue to be issued via emailed letters from the General Secretary and/or Moderator. All other relevant advice will continue to be sent via the special Coronavirus editions of Synod eNews, which will appear in your inbox from "Communications". eNews and emailed letters are sent to all Presbyteries, all ministers, all church councils.

As of 5/4/2020

LIVE-STREAMING WORSHIP

Q How many people can be involved in live-streaming worship services?

The religious gathering, religious ceremony, religious instruction, non-denominational ceremony or other similar services and ceremonies are permitted if lawfully provided remotely by electronic means (eg live-streamed).

The streaming of ceremonies/performances is permitted only where the number of people at the premises is limited to five (which includes those participating in the ceremony and those providing technical support) and the following social distancing requirements can be met:

- Each person must maintain a distance of at least 1.5m from another person
- At least 4sqm of floor area per person is required in the place where the ceremony/performance takes place. This means the immediate area/room around the participants where the ceremony is performed.

In addition, you must take measures to mitigate any risk of disease transmission by ensuring the following measures are in place:

- Exclude persons who are unwell from participating in the production of the live streaming

- Exclude persons in identified vulnerable groups from participating in the ceremony and the production of the live streaming, including:
 - Those who are immuno-compromised, etc.
 - over 70
 - over 65 with significant medical conditions
 - Aboriginal Tasmanians over 50 with significant medical conditions
- Ensure all people present practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and provide appropriate hand washing facilities and hand sanitisers
- Maintain environmental cleaning standards in line with those published by the Australian Government Department of Health

If you are in Tasmania, reassure your congregation you are undertaking the live stream in compliance with the requirements of the Public Health Act Direction relating to mass gatherings. If you have any further questions, contact Paul Hunt, State Manager Environmental Health Services on **6166 0698**.

As of 6/4/2020

PRE-RECORDING WORSHIP

Q Are there any differences in the requirements for pre-recording worship vs live-streaming?

As the basic process is the same for both, the same practices should be applied.

As of 6/4/2020

SAFE (DIGITAL) MINISTRY

Q What safety measures should be adopted for ministry within the digital space?

The Culture of Safety Unit has prepared some guidelines for leaders and communities, offering commentary and interpretation of how our existing Child Safety resources and policies, and the Uniting Church Code of Ethics, continue to shape our digital ministry practices. To view the guidelines visit: www.victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry

As of 7/4/2020



COVID-19

FAQs

AS AT APRIL 9, 2020

GATHERINGS

Q What face-to-face gatherings are permitted at church?

Places of worship are not to be opened or used for worship services with any congregations, except for weddings and funerals – as indicated below.

Weddings may be held in places of worship, with the maximum number of five people present, using appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices.

Funerals may be held in places of worship, with the maximum number of 10 people present, using appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices.

The guidelines for Weddings and Funerals are the same whether conducted indoors or outdoors.

Community halls or similar are not to be used by any groups, Church-related or other. If halls or other facilities are intended to be used for Essential Public Services such as food banks, homeless services, or education they can remain open for the delivery of these services only (applying all other health and safety measures). If you are in doubt about whether the service is an Essential Public Service, seek advice either via your presbytery or contact:

uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au

As of 7/4/2020

Q What face-to-face gatherings are permitted away from church?

No face-to-face congregation-related gatherings, such as prayer groups, study groups or social groups, are to take place in people's homes, buildings or outdoors. Church Council and congregation committee meetings may only be held via teleconference and/or videoconference.

As of 7/4/2020

SYNOD

Q What if we need to contact someone from Synod Ministries and Operations?

Whilst they may be working remotely, all Synod staff are still working. Please contact any staff member as normal, but please be aware that they may not have all of the answers at their fingertips quite as readily as usual.

As of 5/4/2020

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Q What federal government funding can the UCA access and will congregations have access to it?

The Synod, in conjunction with the Assembly and other synods, is actively pursuing all government support programs, including the Job Keeper Payment and the Cash Flow Boost that are designed to help organisations and staff directly affected by measures announced by government to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

At this stage the application process is synod wide, across synod ministries and operations and congregations as the Australian Taxation Office wishes to deal with just one entity. Now legislation has been passed more information will become available.

Congregations and presbyteries should not take individual action and will be informed as soon as more information is available.

As of 8/4/2020





RENT RELIEF REQUESTS

Q What do we do if we are approached by tenants for Covid-19 rent relief?

Rent relief is not automatic. Our Property Services and Legal departments have compiled guidelines for handling rent relief requests, both commercial and residential. If you wish to support a rent relief application, there is a form which needs to be completed before any rent relief can be offered. Details available at: www.victas.uca.org.au/resourcing/covid19-worship-resources

As of 6/4/2020

KINDERGARTEN

Q We have a kindergarten operating from a church-owned building. Do we need to close it?

Early Learning Centres, including kindergartens, are considered to be “education” and, as such, are not currently covered in the list of services to be closed. This is likely to change, so please monitor future government directives. Social Distancing regulations should be encouraged wherever possible.

As of 5/4/2020

OP SHOPS

Q Can we keep our Op Shop open?

Op-shops can continue to operate in Victoria unless directed otherwise by local authorities, and provided that social distancing measures are put in place for staff, volunteers and visitors. It should also be noted that some Op Shops may need to close for a short time while addressing the current requirements.

Op Shops run by Uniting VicTas should consult Uniting for additional guidelines to the following:

- Staff and volunteers aged 70+ should be asked to stay at home.
- Op Shops are considered an essential service and are also considered a workplace, therefore are excluded from the current “two-person limit” on gatherings.

You may of course choose to adjust how you operate your shop, such as operating only on a case-by-case basis by request to support local needs and/or in partnership with local community services.

In line with social distancing requirements, the number of persons in an Op Shop at any one time should be limited, using a rule of one person per 4sqm, including staff and volunteers, and people should remain a distance of 1.5m apart wherever possible. It may be helpful to mark this distance on the floor near service counters as a reminder to visitors.

As of 5/4/2020

MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Q Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Ethnolink have information available in 51 languages at: www.ethnolink.com.au

As of 6/4/2020

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Q Where can I access worship resources to help me keep connected?

Our worship resources page, which caters for all people across our Synod, is updated each week. Available at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

As of 6/4/2020

HOLY COMMUNION

Q What changes to worship services are permissible?

Assembly has approved a number of temporary changes to worship services on the Assembly website: www.assembly.uca.org.au

As of 6/4/2020



COVID-19

FAQs

AS AT APRIL 9, 2020

CONGREGATION WEBSITE TRAINING

Q Will training sessions for new congregation websites still go ahead?

These have been postponed indefinitely. Congregations and presbyteries that have booked training days will be contacted with alternative dates when this becomes possible.

As of 27/3/2020

UPDATED INFORMATION

Q How will we know if the information on this page is still current?

This FAQ sheet will be updated WEEKLY and re-sent in every Coronavirus edition of eNews. Please check this page each week for anything which is of particular interest. If in doubt, check with Synod Ministries and Operations or with your presbytery.

As of 6/4/2020

CROSSLIGHT

Q Will Crosslight continue to be published?

Our Communications team will continue to produce Crosslight, however while the current lockdowns are in place, it will only be available online, as either a “flip book” (which can be read on screen) or as a printable PDF.

The April “Flip book” edition is available at: www.issuu.com/ucavictas/docs/2020cross_04aprilweb and the next edition will be published in June.

News and feature stories are posted to Crosslight’s website on a regular basis available at: www.crosslight.org.au

As of 5/4/2020

OTHER QUESTIONS

Q What if we have questions that aren’t on this FAQ sheet?

Ask the relevant person/department at Synod or your presbytery. This FAQ document will contain additional topics as they become known.

As of 6/4/2020

