

Update: Covid -19 Easing of restrictions

As the Victorian Government begins a scheduled easing of restrictions, we are wondering when Warragul Uniting Church will be able to resume worship services. As of today, places of worship can be open to private worship or small religious ceremonies for up to 20 people in a single indoor space.

Multiple services or ceremonies can be held on the same day, but cleaning should occur between services or ceremonies. At least one hour should be allowed between services or ceremonies to reduce the risk of crowds at entrances and exits and to enable cleaning. The four-square metre rule applies, which limits the number of people who can be in each separate space.

The current restrictions in the paragraph above make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to run multiple services and fund the cost of a deep clean between services for 20 people at a time.

On the 22nd June, restrictions ease for the hospitality industry and therefore may also ease for places of worship; thus, allowing groups of up to 50 people in one indoor space.

Currently Church Council is reviewing the possibility of returning to worship at that stage. The issues being considered are:

1. The church building requires a major clean following the guidelines from Safework Australia before reopening. This includes both inside and outside and carries a cost of around \$2000.
2. The worship area, entrance and other areas will require markings designating the requirement to keep a distance of 1.5 metres when entering the church, entering the worship area and the worship area seating.
3. The building and bathrooms must be adequately supplied with soap, disposable handtowels and hand sanitiser.
4. A professional deep clean will be required after each service.
5. We will need to record of all the people who attend, including contact details.

So, you can see the huge task before us and, if we are to reopen, who do we exclude? We need to take care of the members of the congregation who are at the most risk- and I guess that includes most of us over 70's.

A great deal of planning is going on at the moment, so please bear with us while we work through the guidelines provided by the Victoria and Tasmania Synod.

So, at this stage, we will continue to provide services via email and post (and church website) until we are able to return to regular worship services. And most importantly, try to stay in touch with each other; telephone or visit where you can and, if you can, join the ZOOM morning tea on each Sunday at 11.00 am.

A quick reminder: the church office is open for 'phone calls on Tuesdays and Thursday

On behalf of the leadership team:

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