



18 March 2020

To all Parishioners of the Parish of Manuka

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are all experiencing very challenging times as the COVID-19 virus spreads throughout the world. Today the Prime Minister has announced a restriction on indoor non-essential public gatherings numbering of 100 people or greater. In light of this, the Church Wardens and I have agreed that **all Sunday congregational services in the Parish of Manuka – at St Paul's Manuka and St David's Red Hill – will be suspended until further notice.**

This is not a decision that we make lightly, however, we are a large parish, with many people in the high-risk category for COVID-19. We need to ensure each other's well-being. Cancelling only our larger services is not realistic as this may merely inflate attendance at other services. Maintaining adequate distancing between people would also be a challenge.

We are blessed that we live in an age where digital communications are possible. While Sunday corporate worship will not continue for the time being, the pulse of worship will continue to beat within our community in these ways:

- the clergy will compose prayers and reflections which will be recorded in St Paul's each week and put onto our website along with contributions from our excellent church musicians
- a weekly Epistle from St Paul's will be circulated and made available on our website – this will include articles, reflections and prayers composed by our clergy and parishioners
- pastoral contact with the vulnerable will be maintained by phone and email
- some parish groups may opt to use Zoom / Skype for online meetings
- other devotional material will be made available through our website
- praying for one another – please remember to pray the clergy as we navigate this unusual situation, those whose funeral, baptism and wedding plans will be affected.

Caring for one another – this is a time to practise what we preach: loving our neighbours as ourselves and keeping faith that God is an ever-present help in trouble (Ps 46).

I urge parishioners who feel isolated and distressed or have material need to be in contact with the Parish Clergy.

I also take this opportunity to note that closing our doors for the time being will have an obvious negative financial impact on the Parish. Parishioners who have not yet taken up direct giving are strongly urged to consider this now that weekly collections will not be received so that when 'normal service resumes' we are indeed able to provide normal service. Our account details for direct giving are: BSB 702389 Account 05200454.

The Reverend Dr Benjamin Edwards
Rector of Manuka