



The Scots' Church Melbourne

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN VICTORIA, FOUNDED 1838

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19 May 2020

Dear friends

We hope this letter finds you in good health and good spirits. It's time to update you on how things are going during this strange and unsettling time of pandemic precautions.

Public worship

Since mid-March, we have been unable to gather safely and legally for public worship, and the Scots' Church sanctuary itself has been closed.

We have tried to provide you with "the next best thing" through pre-recorded worship services available on our website. We hope you have been able to access these and to join in worship, wherever you are.

We are grateful for the cooperation of our guest preachers during this time of "virtual worship". Rev Prof Robert Gribben, Rev Dr Peter Adam and Rev David Jones have provided us with first class preaching, each in their own style. We look forward to Rev Murray Capill and Rev David Burke preaching for us through June. We are also pleased to tell you that Robert Gribben has graciously agreed to return to us for the month of July.

Richard O'Brien

Sadly, Rev Richard O'Brien has been forced to take extended sick leave due to a medical condition. Please uphold Richard, Rosemary and their daughters in your prayers. Be assured that Richard is receiving the best of care.

We have had to call on others to step into some of the several roles Richard normally fulfills in his ministry. In particular, we are grateful to Sonal Herlaker, Andrew Wong and Litha Heshusius. Here's why:

City Bible Study (CBS)

Mr Sonal Herlekar has taken on the leadership of CBS during Richard's absence. CBS continues through live streaming on Tuesday evenings. If you would like to participate, you can contact Wendy Gregory by emailing wendy@scotschurch.com or phoning Sonal on 0435 568 335.

***Engage* contemporary evening worship service**

During Richard's absence, we encourage all of you who participate in *Engage* to tap in to Mr Andrew Wong's videoed worship services, which are now provided for St Stephen's Flemington and *Engage*. (These are accessible from the Scots' Church website.)

Should gathered worship recommence while Richard is still on leave, Andrew has agreed to conduct *Engage* worship services for the foreseeable future.

Pastoral Care

While our Indonesian Christian Church and St Stephen's Flemington congregations have their own well-working pastoral care arrangements, the absence of Richard left a big hole in the work of our Scots' Church Pastoral Care Team. That's a hole that has now been plugged, thanks to Rev Litha Heshusius.

Litha graciously agreed to become the Scots' Church Minister for Pastoral Care. She is available two days a week – Wednesdays and Thursdays – and is working closely with the Convener of the Pastoral Care Team, Elder David Gibb. Litha is an ordained Baptist minister, and in this regard, she follows in the footsteps of a former Minister for Pastoral Care; the late and well-loved Rev Dr Geoffrey Blackburn.

Litha can be contacted by emailing lheshusius@bigpond.com or phoning 0414 826 169.

The Big Hymn Sing

Rather than cancel our next scheduled Big Hymn Sing, the Kirk Session's COVID-19 Commission has approved a different type of Big Hymn Sing. This one will involve a reduced number of our choir performing with appropriate precautions and social distancing. It will be professionally filmed and produced and made available to the world on You Tube towards the end of June.

Your freewill offerings

We are encouraged that so many of you who would normally contribute financially through the open plate at Sunday worship services have continued to contribute through internet banking or mailing in cheques. This is particularly important at this time as our other sources of revenue are being adversely affected by the lock-down. In particular, the revenue we receive from the Scots' Church Properties Trust, which is largely derived from commercial rentals, has significantly diminished as shops and offices have had to close down.

If you have not yet done so, we encourage you to re-start your freewill offerings by either of the following ways:

- Electronic transfer to **BSB 083 004**, Account number **630 327 585**, or
- By cheque made out to The Scots' Church Melbourne and posted to:
1/156 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000

Looking to the future

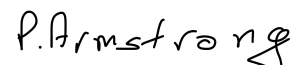
We know that, in God's providence, this pandemic will pass and life will return to "normal". But what will the new normal look like and feel like for us? In many ways, the necessities of the lock-down have forced us as a church to do things differently and to re-examine our priorities and purposes as a people of God belonging to a church that ought to once more be a shining light on a hill in the heart of our nation's second largest metropolis.

In a sense, once all the current restrictions are lifted, we need to "replant" our church again. That is a task in which we can all play a role, each with his or her own God-given gifts and talents. This is the exciting and challenging context facing our next Senior Minister; the one who God will call into this work, and whom our Selection Committee is searching for. It's also the challenge facing our elders and each one of us.

Let us rise to that challenge, firm in our faith and trusting in God, as our church motto declares.



REV PHILIP COURT
Interim Moderator



PETER ARMSTRONG
Session Clerk