



Coronavirus Update 19 March 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Southern Cross Centre,

In light of the worldwide Coronavirus outbreak, we have had to make alterations to our plans for church services, home groups and other activities. While this viral outbreak has taken most of us by surprise, it has not taken God by surprise. At times like this we need to hold solidly to God's Word and not give in to fear.

I want to assure you that God is in control and the viral outbreak is not an act of God's judgment against humanity. The viral outbreak results from the principle of sowing and reaping, most likely linked to issues of food sanitation, people returning to Australia from infected areas, and other factors that have allowed this virus to emerge and spread rapidly.

The Lord wants us to trust His Word in Romans 8:28, *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purposes."* We believe God is at work, He hears our prayers, and that the current crises, while it will cause temporary inconvenience and uncertainty, will most certainly be resolved.

As you know, the situation with the Corona virus changes almost daily. For this reason, we will need to update you regularly, on at least a weekly basis. We will do this by email sent to you, by phone (as necessary) and on our website at: www.southerncrosscentre.org.au We will also communicate to you by a video that will be available on our website and updated from time to time.

Our church elders and staff have been in prayer and discussion about our way forward. There are four things I need to communicate to you at this time:

1. **Regarding our Sunday services.** At present, the Government has limited indoor gatherings to 100 people and has recommended maintaining a distance of 1.5 meters whenever possible. At present our services are attended by an average of about 100 people, including children, each week. We anticipate our attendance will probably decrease in the short term. This Sunday, March 22 we will still have our morning service at 13 Wallington Road, Balga, at 10:00 but ask you not to attend if you have a cough or any other symptoms of illness.

We also recommend if you are over 60 years of age, or are susceptible to infection, you carefully consider whether you should attend Sunday services if you feel it will put you at risk. We want to protect our most vulnerable members from any risk of infection. As a precaution, we will discontinue our coffee and fellowship time following the service until further notice.

For our families we will continue to have our Southern Cross Kids programme running during the service. Weather permitting, we will conduct the lessons outside.

For those who remain home, we will make available to you a stream of our Sunday services on our website (www.southerncrosscentre.org.au), including the messages from the Letter of James, worship, and church news. All Sunday services will be broadcast and available for you to watch until further notice.

Just to reiterate, we will continue to hold our Sunday services until further notice. We will record and stream Sunday Services to you via our SCC website. We will change our worship seating to provide a safe space between worshippers. We will be disinfecting all surfaces at the church building and provide antibacterial soap and paper towels in the toilets. We ask that worshippers refrain from shaking hands, hugging, touching or any other bodily contact. We advise that these arrangements will be reviewed and communicated to you on a weekly basis.

2. **Regarding Home Groups**, they will continue to meet entirely at the discretion of those groups. We encourage home groups to continue to meet but suggest you prayerfully make this decision. We ask you to stay in touch with your home group leader and, if you decide not to meet, that you continue to pray for and support each other. Home groups remain our best vehicle for practical care and fellowship in our church.

We encourage group leaders to start by putting together a plan (even if that plan is only for the next week and will be updated for the following weeks) for how your group will stay closely connected with each other. Then, share your plan with the entire group, and create a clear avenue of communication with you and with each other. Try to include in your communication any specific details you have about when and how your group will next meet together. Direct your group to watch or listen to the streamed worship services as God's Word will continue to sustain us during these times. If you discover pastoral care needs that you are unable to meet, please contact Marg Olsen.

In addition, we recommend that you go out of your way to maintain personal contact with each other. Make phone calls to members of your group, text frequently, email encouragement, or use other social media channels (like WhatsApp or Facebook) to stay connected.

3. **The current Sermon Series on James.** Sermon notes will still be distributed to home group leaders. We will continue our preaching series on James until the Sunday after Easter and then begin a new series on the Parables of Jesus on April 26th. Even if your group decides to discontinue meeting, we urge you to remain in touch with your group leader and other participants and continue to pray for each other.
4. **Regarding Previously Scheduled Activities.** Because of the increasing risk of infection in coming weeks, we have decided to cancel, or postpone until further notice, the following meetings and activities outside the Sunday services and home groups.

- The Worship Night scheduled for Sunday, March 29th has been cancelled
- The Southern Cross Easter Youth Camp has been rescheduled to run from 29 September to 2 October 2020.
- The Men With A Purpose Evening scheduled for next Wednesday, March 25th is cancelled.
- The Leadership Community Meeting scheduled for April 8 is cancelled.
- The Southern Cross WA Leaders Advance with the Peter and Christine Christensen scheduled for May 23rd has been cancelled.

The Coronavirus situation changes on almost a daily basis. Should we need to change plans in any way, we will communicate to you through email, our website, or by phone.

During this time of testing, the Lord wants us to stay close to him and look out for and support each other. We believe this time of emergency and instability will not last for long and we will communicate with you weekly on further developments. If you have any question, or need to speak to any of the leaders, please send us an email on reception@southerncrosscentre.org.au or call us at the church office Tuesday to Friday 9 to 2 on 08 6154 2921, or for pastoral care needs contact your home group leader or if you're not in a home group email Marg Olsen at: office.admin@southerncrosscentre.org.au

We know that in difficult times God is doing a mighty work in us all. The most important thing we can do is PRAY. Pray that we will deepen our roots into our Heavenly Father through prayer and intimacy with Him. Pray for those who are at greatest physical, financial and emotional risk. Pray for our Healthcare system, our hospitals, and the safety of healthcare workers. Pray for our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and for the state and federal governments to make wise decisions to protect our nation and its people. Pray for those facing financial hardship and those who've lost their jobs. Pray for compassion, kindness, and generosity among our fellow Australians. Pray that God will use this crucible for His glory.

Our love and prayers are with you always,

John and Alaine