

Moderator's Letter 2

Dear brothers and sisters,

We've made it through our first weekend of "social isolation" - although, as a number of people have said, I think it's better to think of it as "physical isolation," as our church families make every effort to keep in touch and encourage one another in all kinds of creatively "social" ways.

For some of us there's already significant pain. Maybe you've lost your job, your business has collapsed, your Super fund is shrinking before your eyes, or you had to queue at Centrelink for hours on end. Maybe you're even wondering if you're experiencing the early symptoms of COVID-19 - or you're one of the two thousand or so Australians already infected. Whatever your struggles, I want to encourage you all to keep standing together as brothers and sisters in Christ - even if it's at a physical distance.

Did your congregation meet online last Sunday, or perhaps outdoors, or with two-metre spacing? I've heard from friends who experienced all those options, and in spite of the challenges, reports were positive. It's amazing how much we can change, and how quickly, when change is forced upon us! Of course, in light of this week's announcements from the Prime Minister, it's now no longer possible to gather physically at all.

Joe Durham, a long-time member of **Mitchelton** (and very much a "senior") was excited by the online video service that brought more than 100 faces together on-screen via Zoom. "I don't know how I got it to work, but it was terrific," says Joe. "The video and sound quality were excellent."

Josiah Wilson, pastoring the small congregation at **Living Church Springfield**, streamed the whole service from his laptop on his back porch, with a friend playing guitar.

At the southern end of our state, **Salt Church on the Gold Coast** is taking a different approach. Lead Pastor, Mike O'Connor is using the opportunity to encourage all their members to work through a series of Discipleship Papers, emailed twice a week, while still providing Bible Teaching through an audio Podcast. Online Small Groups, prayer groups and prayer triplets are now being mobilised so people at Salt Church can stay connected together. They're even planning to run Christianity Explored via Zoom.

If this all seems too hard, don't worry, and don't give up! If you're part of a small church, just take the opportunity to pick up the phone and call one another regularly. Although the congregations at **Gordonvale and Babinda** didn't have an online meeting, Pastor Ross Davies has been working hard at pastorally contacting members and the congregation will do a shared daily Bible reading plan and have prayer points and sermons delivered either by email or on paper in people's letter boxes.

On the State level, the **Commission of Assembly** (with members from every Presbytery) will be meeting online each week in an effort to make timely and responsible decisions. Please pray for us regularly, just as we will pray for you. At today's meeting we made a number of new regulations to allow formal meetings like Presbytery, Session, and

congregational AGMs to take place through phone or video link, with provision for online and postal voting.

Amidst all the challenges, there are significant opportunities for us to be salt and light in our communities. Nathan Campbell, pastor of **Living Church City South**, has written [an excellent article](#) on the Gospel Coalition website on how to better connect with and love your local neighbourhood through social media. Let people know you're praying for them, and make the most of every gospel opportunity.

Kind regards,
Phil Strong
Moderator