



THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

Media Statement

In response to the COVID19 pandemic and in line with the rest of the Anglican Province of NSW, the Bishop of Grafton, Dr Murray Harvey, announced today that all churches in the Diocese of Grafton will cease offering public worship from Monday 23 March. While this is for an indefinite period, the situation will be reviewed every fortnight. Please note that this does not include Anglican Schools and only applies to public worship in churches. The closure has been timed so that parishes can inform their parishioners at worship this coming Sunday (22 March) of the forthcoming closure and provide details of any arrangements for the ongoing provision of ministry including pastoral care. However, some parishes may choose to cease public worship with immediate effect. At a time like this the church can play an important leadership role in the community by acting responsibly and following expert advice on the best ways to combat the virus, while not getting caught up in panic and importantly caring for those around us who need it most, such as health care workers, the elderly and those who are unwell. Dr Harvey wrote that by temporarily pausing public services of worship, we are demonstrating our responsibility to the wider community in trying to minimise the spread of the virus in our communities: "As a Diocese we want to cooperate with NSW Health and the wider community in taking immediate and targeted action to contain the virus through early identification of cases, the implementation of social distancing and exclusion strategies as well as the ceasing of non-essential gatherings". Parishes will give thought to how they can continue to provide spiritual and pastoral care. Advice will be given to parishioners about how to access Christian worship and resources online.

19 March 2020 (updated 25/3/20)

The full statement is available at:

<https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pastoral-Letter.pdf>