



## **Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc**

*Assembly of Confessing Congregations of the Uniting Church in Australia*

*Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Proclaiming the truth, Renewing the church*

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### ***ACC Pastoral Letter: 20 March 2020***

**It's time to wake up and let Christ shine on us.**

*"Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:14*

Dear ACC Congregations, Clusters, Groups and Individual Members

We are in a new era, that the world has never seen before. Our churches especially are struggling. Some UCA Synods that aren't as affected by the coronavirus are leaving it for the congregations to decide whether to remain open. A few other state UCA Synods have strongly urged church councils to suspend all worship services in person from this Sunday, to help stop the rapidly advancing spread of the virus and to protect vulnerable people. This includes even small churches.

This seems a wise thing to do as long as we don't think and talk as if our congregations are closing down or being suspended. The worship centre may be closed down for a season, but the body of Christ continues. It is not a time for slumber in the church and the ACC but rather to awaken. In the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ, the congregations are essential to our society at this time even if society deems, they are dispensable. We are light in the Lord, children of the Light (Ephesians 5:8). Christ is present when he is preached among people (BOU par 4). Can we afford to stop preaching the word when the world more than ever is thirsting to hear Christ's word? Many of our congregations may need to stop meeting physically even beginning on Sunday. It is wise to follow the Synod advice. However as Confessing Congregations and members we are entering not a time of increased slumber and rest but rather of waking up and living as children of the Light. There are other ways to be light in this time without necessarily meeting physically. The underground church has discovered this throughout church history, and now its own turn. Take courage and wake up sleepers, rise from the dead, let Christ shine on you. (Ephesians 5:14).

We are also to be very careful how we are to live in this season (Ephesians 5:15). There is great temptation to give in to the panic of the world that is being heightened through the media. We are to be wise and careful, but not afraid. We are to fear the Lord, not the virus. We are to make the most of this new opportunity that presents itself to us in the ACC.

The church, not only the UCA, but all churches will not be the same after the virus has done its course. The world will not be the same. Even our families may not be the same. But Christ will stand firm. God's love will endure and not change. His word will not fail. We will still have a gospel to proclaim.

We may not be able to meet physically but the Lord has prepared us for this time as the ACC. Two years ago, during the Sacred Season leading up to the UCA Assembly the ACC prayer network began a monthly communion zoom service. We have had this service almost every Sunday since. You can join in this service anywhere in Australia by phone, computer, device or smartphone. We also have a prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8am (Sydney time). See below for more details.

If you are in that position of your congregational services being suspended and you have nowhere to worship on Sunday, please do not go to sleep and treat it as a holiday from the Lord and his people. It is time for more prayer, and more preaching of the word, and more encouraging of one another in faith and seeking the Lord in repentance. It is not time to disconnect from the body of Christ. You may find new ways of being church in your congregation. Or you can join with us in our ACC weekly communion service at 3pm NSW, Vic, Tas time; 2:30 SA; 2pm Queensland; 1:30 NT; 12pm WA.

The Lord is at work in our midst. It is also time not to get drunk on never-ending episodes of Netflix, TV or updates on even updates on coronavirus. It is time to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms and hymns, and giving thanks to God our Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:18-20). The Lord Jesus Christ brings into being what otherwise would not exist. He is the one who awakens faith. (Basis of Union Paragraph 4). Are we ready as the Confessing Movement in the UCA, to let the Lord Jesus Christ reach out, command our attention and wake us up from slumber, that we may shine for His glory in this virus and panic filled world?

Much love and prayers to all ACC congregations, clusters, groups and members in this difficult yet promising time with our Lord Jesus Christ we find ourselves in.

Anne

*Rev Anne Hibbard*

*ACC National Council Secretary and Prayer Network Coordinator*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE WEEKLY ACC ZOOM COMMUNION SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE

If you have never used teleconferencing (by phone) or video conferencing, please don't be dismayed. Ask the Lord to help you. Don't let fear of technology stop you from connecting to the body of Christ at this time. Ask a family member or a friend to help you get set up.

(During Daylight saving time)

3pm NSW, Vic, Tas time; 2:30 SA; 2pm Queensland; 1:30 NT; 12pm WA.

Please come 5 minutes early if you can. Remember to have some bread and wine ready.

The service goes a little over an hour, as a communion service usually does. We have a time of gathering with one another, praising God and prayers of confession using a psalm, a bible reading, a short message and discussion with different preachers, communion (please have your own bread and wine ready) prayers for others and a confession from the Basis of Union to end. We don't usually sing, as it is difficult to sing together because of the time delay on zoom.

**How to enter by phone.** (especially good if your internet is patchy or you don't have a computer or device)

Depending on your state ring

0 8 7150 1149 Australia

0 2 8015 6011 Australia

03 7018 2005 Australia

This will get you to Zoom. When they ask for the meeting ID add 506 147 2018 ##.

(After adding the meeting ID number add two hashes found usually on the bottom right of your phone.) This will take you into the meeting.

If you are entering the worship communion on a phone and you have a computer, go to this page which is updated every Sunday before the service. It has the bible readings and prayers we will be using so you can join in.

<https://www.confessingschooloffaith.com/copy-of-day-6-communion-10th-june>

### How to enter by computer

You will need a computer that has both a camera and sound.

Click on this link.

<https://zoom.us/j/5061472018>

If you haven't used zoom before you will need to download the software on your computer first. Watch this tutorial to get you on the way.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhAEoCF7jg>

### How to enter by device

On your tablet, ipad, or smartphone download the zoom conferencing app. It is on a blue background with a white video camera.

Enter the meeting ID: 506 147 2018

You may like to do a trial run before Sunday or Wednesday.