

11 May 2020

To All Ministers & Church Council Chairs

Adjustment to Emergency Management Act: Places of Worship

WA Roadmap Phase 2

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Further to my previous letters of 9 and 29 April, which highlighted the changes to the official guidelines as they relate to Places of Worship I am pleased to advise the effect of the WA Roadmap Phase 2 announced on 10 May 2020 as they pertain to the Uniting Church in Western Australia.

As a background, Phase 1 of the WA Roadmap to recovery has been identified as commencing on 27 April 2020, which, amongst other things, allowed non-work groups of up to 10 persons to gather. Phase 2 will commence on Monday 18 May 2020. Basically it increases the size of groups able to gather, allows for some dining out, extends regional travel and most importantly, allows for Places of Worship to reopen in a modified way.

From Monday 18 May 2020, Places of Worship may open with a limit of 20 attendees plus those required to conduct and broadcast the service (to a maximum of 10 people), provided that there are no more than one person per 4 square metres in a single space. *Note: A Place of Worship is considered as a single venue, so the Worship Space and Church Hall, although different spaces are considered to be a single venue. (Gosh, this is becoming complicated!)*

This will probably still limit a large number of our congregations from having a worship service in their building from Sunday 24 May 2020 but it is a welcome relaxation. Congregations with less than 20 attendees may host Worship Services in their building but need to ensure that this number is not exceeded. To avoid turning people away at the door (which is not very welcoming!), congregations need to carefully consider their response to this relaxation. Most congregations would probably need to maintain their online Worship Services with the maximum possible attendance of 20 invited persons at the live or recorded event.

However, from Monday 18 May, Congregations are able to gather for Bible Studies, Prayer meetings, Church Council meetings etc provided the number of people involved does not exceed 20 persons, and the 4 square metre rule is followed. This is to be welcomed as we begin the process to reconnect with each other, and together with God.

Please note that prior to reopening, all venues, including church venues will need to complete a COVID Safety Plan and have it available for inspection by authorising officers. Details of the requirements are not yet available but Rev Dr David Ferguson, the Presbytery Officer, will advise you as soon as we are provided with details.

The Uniting Church Centre staff will begin to return to work in the office from 18 May 2020 and most meetings of Committees will be able to be held in the Sir Ronald Wilson Room.

God bless



Rev David de Kock
General Secretary