

**From:** [Burke, Kate](#)  
**Subject:** Can we celebrate Holy Communion - a further communication from District Bishop Lester Priebsenow,  
**Date:** Thursday, 28 May 2020 2:26:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [Attachment 1 COVID-19 Bishop's Update Vic-Tas 15 May.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 2 considerations for safe return to worship.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS 20200528.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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To pastors, office bearers, and lay workers in the Victorian Tasmanian District

## Can we celebrate Holy Communion?

While Government advice, current and for the period after May 31<sup>st</sup>, refers to "private worship and small religious ceremonies," for a specified number of people (currently 10 plus officiants but soon to increase to 20 after May 31<sup>st</sup>), there has been no particular Victorian advice about celebrating Communion.

However, because the celebration of Communion involves the preparation and distribution of elements to be consumed by mouth, particular care needs to be taken in observing strict hygiene requirements. There are also requirements relating to density quotients (number of people permitted in the space) distancing, signage and attendance registration (sections relevant to places of worship are outlined [HERE](#) in a snapshot of the Chief Health Officer's 'Restricted Activity Directions' document dated 24 May 2020). Under a state of emergency, as is currently still in force, directions issued by the Chief Health Officer are law.

There is a delicate balance here. We must balance our Godly desire to gather for the Sacrament with our responsibility to care for the safety of all members, particularly the vulnerable, and to honour the governing authorities whom God has placed over us.

People also need to show consideration for the pastor and lay leaders who are responsible for ensuring these requirements are met and for deciding who may attend any small worship service. Please refer to Bishop John Henderson's comprehensive advice about many of those considerations in the LCA/NZ COVID-19 update no.9 – 14 May 2020.

It is a blessing to hear of people hungering for communion with their Lord and each other. Let us remember that it is also a blessing that our Lord has given us three means of grace – His Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper - to nurture in us the assurance of our salvation in Christ. God can still feed us with his Word and our Baptism, even if for a time we were unable to celebrate Holy Communion. There have been many times in history during which communion has not been available for a time, for one reason or another, but the good news is that God's grace and forgiveness always covers us, even as we joyfully anticipate our return to the Lord's Table together.

Please also keep an eye on the LCA's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and District websites for updates on this as they become available.

Every blessing,

Lester

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As the LCA continues to respond to the COVID 19 situation we suggest that you check the [LCA COVID 19 response page](#) (updated frequently) as the primary resource.  
If you are not receiving the [LCA eNews](#) we suggest that you take time to subscribe so you are aware of the supports and resources available from the LCA.

You can also view material on the [LCA Victorian District website](#) on the COVID 19 Resources Tabs and drop down menu for resource sharing and FAQs

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**From:** Burke, Kate  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 May 2020 2:48 PM  
**Subject:** a message to pastors and Church Councils on the easing of restrictions and considerations for return to gathering in worship  
**Importance:** High

Dear Pastors and Office bearers

With the welcome news of the easing of restrictions for small worship gatherings we understand congregations are planning to gather again in worship in the next few weeks. We pray that this will be a time of joy and spiritual refreshment for all. With this in mind we ask that you be patient and responsible as there are many considerations in returning to worship in order to be safe and to be compliant. Please see Attachment 1 Bishop Lester's message 15 May. In addition attachment 2 is a spreadsheet of practical steps to consider and attachment three is a series of questions and answers (amended 28 May 2020).

We sincerely ask that pastors and leaders remember that COVID – 19 is still a significant threat to our population and so continue to abide by your state government's legislation on gathering to the letter, regarding the number of people gathering together (Ten this Sunday and twenty from 01 June in Victoria) and the one person per 4 square metre rule plus 1.5 meter distancing. You should be able to readily demonstrate that this has been abided by.

Please ask attending members to sign in and provide hand sanitiser and multiple pens to reduce infection risk. In the event of a local outbreak it will be necessary that the records are quickly available to the department of health.

Please observe the passing of the peace verbally only and please make an announcement to this effect.

While people may be attentive to physical distancing and other actions related to reducing infection while in church, both arriving at, and more particularly leaving after church, may be points where members inadvertently cross boundaries. It is important to remind members that they must still be observant of the government guidelines out of consideration for one another and the local community. It is also important that we are seen as a church to be

compliant and considerate. Therefore it may be wise to make an announcement to this effect prior to leaving the service and also have a person appointed to guide people who may linger.

We would also ask that you review the way in which the service was conducted each week to ensure that any possible risks are identified and dealt with before the next Sunday.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Lester Priebbenow  
District Bishop, Victoria and Tasmania

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