

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and to comply with Government directives, churches in the Diocese of Grafton are currently closed to the public.

We are offering online worship, online Bible Studies and other online group options in addition to ongoing ministries such as food pantries.

This is an extraordinary time in history which is causing everyone to rethink what we do and how we interact with one another. The church's doors are normally open and people are welcomed with open arms. So the current crisis is challenging us to learn how to be the church in very different ways. In our prayers, let us give thanks for health care professionals, medical scientists, emergency personnel and others who are working to protect our communities, provide essential services, care for those affected and find a cure. We should also pray for the sick and those who struggle with anxiety and fear.

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.

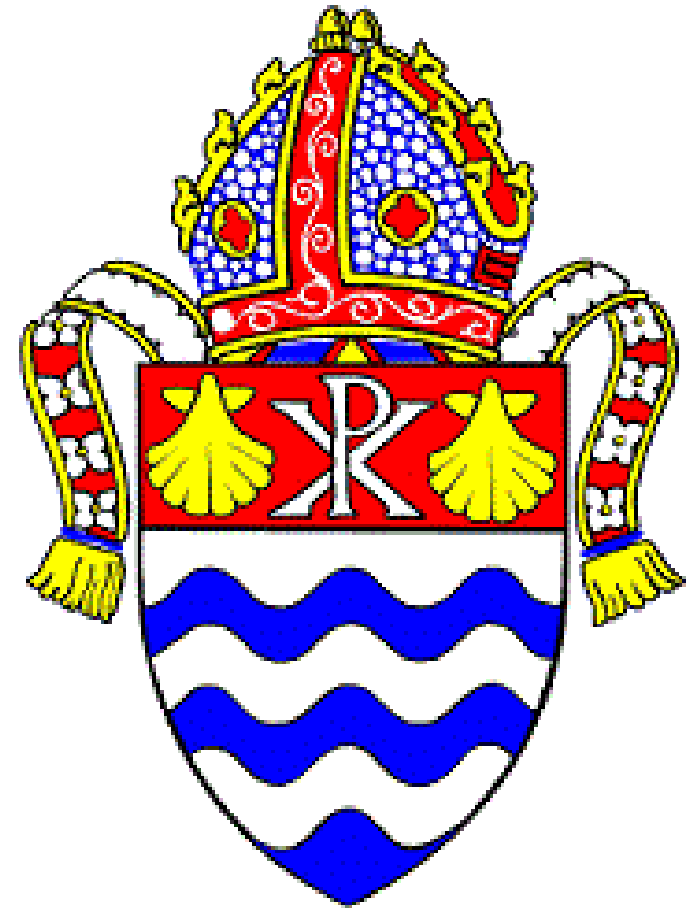
Parishes are continuing to provide spiritual and pastoral care in creative ways. Further information on our response can be found at [www.graftondiocese.org.au](http://www.graftondiocese.org.au)

I am drawn to St Paul's words in his letter to the Christians at Philippi, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (*Philippians 4:6-7*).

May we too find the peace that God offers in an anxious world.

*+Murray Harvey*

Dr Murray Harvey, Bishop of Grafton  
March 2020



Online worship and other resources for Parishes and individuals can be found at

<https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Resources-for-Parishes.pdf>