

March 2020
Issue 111

The Next Step

Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)



Canberra Aboriginal Church

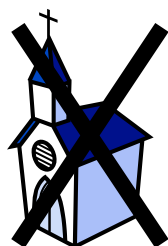
Being CHURCH in 'interesting' times

There is a curse that apparently is of Chinese origin - "May you live in interesting times."

It suggests that 'interesting' from an outsider's viewpoint can equate to 'turbulence' and 'danger' for anyone living in those times

The COVID-19 threat is proving interesting, not only from a medical research viewpoint, but it is causing widespread disruption, anxiety and danger for people the world over.

Just as in times gone by when people living in the midst of turmoil, fighting or persecution were sustained by their Christian faith, we should look to God for wisdom and strength in the face of this different but real challenge. We, like everyone else, are not immune to COVID-19 sickness, but we have God given wisdom we can use to minimise the risks of catching it. If we do become ill, God will remain with us and take care of us no matter what the outcome.



Both Canberra Christian Fellowship and the Canberra Aboriginal Church have made the decision to suspend worship services for the time being. The virus is spreading in the community and the threat to health is likely to increase before it decreases. It would be unwise to ignore health authority warnings and government actions reinforce the seriousness of the threat the coronavirus presents. Both congregations have members who would be at higher risk due to age or already existing medical conditions.

Worship services may be suspended but worship is not. Obviously we need to adapt to prevailing conditions and we will do so.

Our private prayers should continue and in them we can pray for each other in this time of relative isolation.

We have our Bibles and can still read and study them.

There are many devotional resources available on the internet and in printed form. They can help focus our minds on our God. We will circulate some material from among ourselves as well. Check our CCF website (www.canberracf.org.au) for devotions and some old recorded sermons.

Our fellowship need not suffer. In place of gathering at church and seeing each other there, we can keep in touch over the phone and support and encourage each other that way.

Perhaps this disruption to our normal routine will help us look afresh at our faith, how we express it and identify improved ways of interacting with our God and His people.



ID

**Canberra Christian Fellowship (in the Methodist Tradition)
and
Canberra Aboriginal Church**

**Worship Services SUSPENDED
due to COVID-19 coronavirus threat**

The Secret of Contentment by Billy Graham

I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe him. It is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead . . .

—Ephesians 1:19,20 (TLB)

Jesus told His disciples that the world would hate them. They would be “as sheep in the midst of wolves.” They would be arrested, scourged, and brought before governors and kings. Even their loved ones would persecute them. As the world hated and persecuted Him, so it would treat His servants. Thousands of Christians have learned the secret of contentment and joy in trial. Some of the happiest Christians I have met have been lifelong sufferers. They have had every reason to sigh and complain, being denied so many privileges and pleasures that they see others enjoy, yet they have found greater cause for gratitude and joy than many who are prosperous, vigorous and strong.

In all ages, Christians have found it possible to maintain the spirit of joy in the hour of trial. In circumstances that would have felled most men, they have so completely risen above them that they actually have used the circumstances to serve and glorify Christ.

Prayer for the day

Lord Jesus, keep us ever mindful of the need to rejoice in You constantly; to go beyond the circumstance, no matter how desperate, and to see You as our hope and joy.

from <https://billygraham.org/devotion/the-secret-of-contentment/>

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Chaplains

Mr. Owen Chadwick - Universities chaplaincy

Rev. Bob Prior - Racecourse chaplaincy

Rev. Paul Tabulutu - N.S.W. / A.C.T. Fijian churches



Please remember Owen, Bob, Paul and their work in your prayers.

Services over recent weeks have included the following:

Sunday **15th March** - **Pastor Steve Prior** - Spiritual or physical: our greatest concern?



Pastor Steve Prior

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Thanksgiving

This coming Sunday was to have been CCF's Harvest Thanksgiving service.

We don't need a produce display and special service to be thankful to God, although it is a good reminder to us of His goodness.

Let us do what the old hymn suggests - "Count your blessings, name them one by one; count your blessings, see what God hath done" and then we can come before Him with thanksgiving.