

April 2020
Issue 113

The Next Step

&

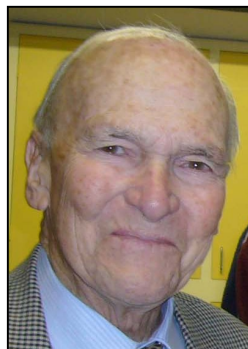
**Canberra
Aboriginal Church**

Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)



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

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



Alec - 100

2 April



Oberammergau - 1633 - The beginning of the Passion Play - (Plague)

The history of the Oberammergau Passion Play begins in 1633. In the midst of the Thirty Years' War, after months of suffering and dying from the plague, the people of Oberammergau pledged to act out the »play of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ« once every 10 years. [»From this day forward, not a single person perished, even though a great number of them still showed signs of the plague«]

At Whitsun in 1634, they fulfilled their promise for the first time. By the middle of the 18th century, spectators from all over Germany came to Oberammergau attracted by the great power and atmosphere of the play. 2020 will see the 42nd instalment of the play that the citizens of Oberammergau have maintained through the centuries with unique continuity.

In a five-hour-performance, more than 2000 participants bring the story of Jesus of Nazareth to the impressive open-air stage of the Passion Play Theatre. Almost half of Oberammergau's population will devotedly act out the story of the man whose tidings for more than 2000 years have brought hope and power of life to an incredible number of people.

They will play it from his entry into Jerusalem until his death at the cross and his resurrection.

The 42nd Oberammergau Passion Play will be postponed due to the current situation caused by the corona pandemic. ... the responsible persons have decided to postpone the premiere of the Passion Play, which was planned for 16 May 2020, until 2022. The premiere is now scheduled for May 21, 2022.



The Last Supper

from pages on the <https://www.passionsspiele-oberammergau.de> site

Chaplains

Please pray that the chaplains we particularly support can adapt their ministries to the conditions we all currently face. - Mr. Owen Chadwick - Universities chaplaincy, Rev. Bob Prior - Racecourse chaplaincy, Rev. Paul Tabulutu - N.S.W. / A.C.T. Fijian churches



Roy Dallos has prepared mini sermons for the use of the people at South Coast Presbyterian Church where he worships, and he has offered them to us for our use as well. They are in printed form and can be read through in a few minutes. He hopes they will focus our minds on God and might stimulate discussion with each other over the phone in a way similar to Sunday lunch time discussions about sermons that had just been delivered in church.

I will post them out with printed copies of this newsletter or add them as an additional attachment with e-mailed newsletters.

We have around 20 free Easter kids story books from the Bible Society. If you'd like copies for children, grand-children or young friends, let us know and we'll do our best to get them to you.



Devotional material



Prayer



Contacts

Canberra Christian Fellowship
P.O. Box 184
Campbell 2612
A.C.T.

E-mail: canberracf@yahoo.com.au
Website: <http://www.canberracf.org.au/>

TNS editor : Ian Denton - e-mail : iancd@yahoo.com

Bible Reading



Fellowship by Phone

Prayer Points

Please pray

- for Aboriginal communities all over Australia
- for Aboriginal pastors across the nation
- for the Aboriginal community in the A.C.T. and Queanbeyan
- for the homeless.



Some other churches

How are other churches adjusting to COVID-19 restrictions?

Crossroads and Stromlo churches are conducting services online over the internet.

The Fijian Methodist Church is also conducting live streaming services (in Fijian)

The South Coast Presbyterian Church Roy attends originally intended still meeting but in the open air on a farm and practising social distancing however now, with increased restrictions, will distribute devotional material to their people.

Let us pray that churches everywhere find effective means to maintain their worship, witness and fellowship.

The importance of not practising social distancing

Okay, I know I'm going to get into trouble for that headline. This is too important to send confusing signals. And I agree. I'm getting the message. We've got to flatten the curve, stem the flow, stop transmission, practice good hygiene, wash hands, clean surfaces, use hand sanitiser, keep away from cash, protect our elderly, care about the vulnerable. I get all that. I'm one of the people at risk. And I live with a GP, have kids who are teachers, doctors, social workers, and students. But let's be clear.

It's not social distancing we need. It's physical distancing.

Physical distancing is a strategy to stem the spread of the pandemic. Social distancing creates a mental health risk, amidst a whole lot of other problems. We weren't created to be alone. We need each other. Now more than ever. Fear, anxiety, panic, stress are all around us. We need kindness, calm, consideration, and courtesy.

Yesterday our church was told we can no longer meet on school premises. Like so many churches, we are exploring online strategies, streaming videos of talks, delivering Bible studies via the internet, purchasing hardware, trying out software, and scrambling to know what we're going to do and how we'll make it work. We can all play around with technology. We might even be able to make ourselves or our churches look better than we ever have before. But that's not really the issue.

How are we going to do community? How will we put the 'one another' exhortations from the New Testament into practice? How will we stay in touch with one another? How will we identify the needy? How will we encourage the spiritually weary? How will we offer the message of real hope to a world in crisis? How will we pray together and for each other? How will we support one another when we need to keep our distance, when we can't congregate, or when we need to quarantine or self-isolate?



Let's do a thought experiment. Take yourself back 30 or 40 years to a world without the internet. There is no Google, no Facebook, no email, no Instagram, no Twitter. How would we manage our current challenges in such times? My first thought is that we'd go back to speaking on the telephone. Remember the telephone! We'd call and say, "How are you doing?" "Is there anything I can do for you?" "Have you got enough toilet paper?" "Can I drop a meal around?" "How are you off for money?" "Are you feeling any better today?" "What can I pray for you?"

We might call one another to pray for each other, or read the Scriptures together, or get some help on a matter, or share ideas on how we can encourage, help and support one another...