



Abundant
Grace
Liberating
Hope

Uniting Church in Australia
Assembly

President: Dr Deidre Palmer

General Secretary: Colleen Geyer

26 March 2020

A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Life and Hope.

In this time of suffering and upheaval, that continues to unfold from day to day, we are responding as the people of God, with love and care for our neighbours. Thank you to the many Uniting Church congregations, faith communities, agencies and schools, who are working together on ways we can continue our worship, witness and service, while we are physically apart.

As the Uniting Church we are navigating new waters, and exploring different ways of being Church. It is my prayer that this will be a time of deepening our relationship with God and one another, as we discern those things that are most important for our identity, life and mission as Christ's church.

Christ is present with us. In the Basis of Union we acknowledge "that the Church is able to live and endure through the changes of history only because its Lord comes, addresses and deals with people in and through the news of his completed work" .. and Christ calls us into "the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord." (Basis of Union, Paragraph 4).

At this time we are invited to listen to God's Word to us, to support and encourage one another, and to prophetically participate in Christ's mission of healing, love, justice and hope in the world.

In the coming months, I encourage you to be patient and generous with one another, taking time to listen deeply to those in distress, and for whom fear and confusion are constantly present. This is a time for us to be a welcoming, compassionate, loving and creative community in Christ

God's Spirit gifts us with courage and imagination to step out in faith to follow God into an unknown future. We remember that God gives us "the gift of the Spirit, so we will not lose our way." (paragraph 3 Basis of Union).

I have met with the Moderators this week via videoconference, and we have shared in prayer and in conversation about our Church across the country. We have prepared a weekly cycle of prayers that could be used by congregations and in people's personal devotions, as a way of connecting us together, as we pray each

day for one another and the life of the Australian community. We hope these prayers nurture and encourage you.

May God sustain you with love and strength, as we bear witness to Christ's hope and love for all people and the whole creation.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deidre Palmer". The script is cursive and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish at the end of the name.

Dr Deidre Palmer
President
Uniting Church in Australia Assembly