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**Church notices:** Email Annette; [ameldrum@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ameldrum@ozemail.com.au)

### Church Finances

Please consider continuing to support our church finances as some running costs will continue despite our closure.

Direct Debit can be set up using account details below.

Cheques can be posted to PO Box 205, Wollongong 2520.

Otherwise simply put your tithe aside until we re-open.

**Congregational Church Wollongong**

**BSB: 032695**

**Account No: 494743**

Richard forwarded: **World Council of Churches member church,  
The United Church of Canada**

**"[A Prayer During Times of COVID-19](#)."** It reads in part,

"In this time of COVID-19, we pray:  
When we aren't sure, God, help us be calm;  
when information comes from all sides,  
correct and not, help us to discern;  
when fear makes it hard to breathe,  
and anxiety seems to be the order of the day,  
slow us down, God;  
help us to reach out with our hearts,  
when we can't touch with our hands;  
help us to be socially connected,  
when we have to be socially distant;  
help us to love as perfectly as we can,  
knowing that "perfect love casts out all fear."



## Wollongong Congregational Church

**5th April 2020 Palm Sunday**

**Daylight Saving ends Sunday- clocks go back 1 hr.**

Dear Church family, greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour. We trust that everyone is keeping safe and in touch with others for friendship, prayer and support as needed. Our contact groups and prayer chain are operating so please let us know if you have any further needs. Keeping our sense of community is important.

Con has recorded the first weekly devotion on video which can be viewed on our website [www.wollongongcongregationalchurch.org](http://www.wollongongcongregationalchurch.org) from Sunday morning. **JUST CLICK ON THE LINK ABOVE!**  
Next Sunday AN EASTER SERVICE WILL BE ON THE WEBSITE.

**Tune in to Con's radio program on Pulse 94.1 FM**  
**Sunday Worship 7-10am. Repeated Tues night 10pm - midnight.**  
**Morning devotions 6-7am each day.**

**Please set aside a few minutes each Sunday around 10am to unitedly pray through the prayer points in this newsletter and give thanks for God's blessings. This will unite us in spirit as a church family. May God bless us each one and as a church, give us wisdom and keep us all in good health.**

**Tuesday video linkup Bible Study 10am—please join us on Zoom!**  
We met successfully this week from our own homes -see below. Contact Annette if you would like to join in. Download Zoom, free software.



## Psalm 23 and Ephesians 3:14-21

I am a bit over hearing that we live in unprecedented times, and the only news is the Coronavirus and people defying the Governments pleas for social distancing! Are our freedoms being taken away from us? I would say no— yet some, for whatever reason believe that it is their right to put others in danger. The Government is urging isolation and distancing- this insidious disease is not a respecter of persons and will seek to thrive and live if people give it a chance. Distancing and isolation appear to be the best plan of attack. What is it with us human beings? We just do not want to be told. Perhaps this is why the Bible includes the phrase **'all we like sheep have gone astray'**? Sheep I am told are hard to lead, they are so easily distracted. Maybe, this is a cry for help- fear and loss cause each one of us to act and react in ways that we might not under normal circumstance.

This crisis has brought out the worst and the best in us- there are some tremendous stories of self-sacrifice and care. On the 27<sup>th</sup> March a man was so moved by the lines at a Centrelink branch that he withdrew \$10k out of his bank and handed everyone \$100. I am sure more good stories will emerge?

***Fear and doubt is not a new phenomenon, many a Christian has experienced them. It is not a sin to fear or to doubt, or to experience anxiety, it becomes a sin when we wallow in these emotions, or if they lead us to sin. When we act out of disbelief or fear we are prone to do dumb things. When in this state, it is best just to own it, tell God exactly what is going on and determine that despite feelings or emotions, to trust Him. Is it easy? I would be lying to you if I said that it was. What we must understand is that it is not the amount of faith that I have, or you have, but the object of our faith.***

I like the hymn, **'In Christ alone'** written by Stuart Townend

***In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song***

***This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm***

***What heights of love, what depths of peace. When fears are stilled, when strivings cease.***

***My Comforter, my All in All. Here in the love of Christ I stand.***

The Lord Jesus knows who we are, He knows how we are feeling, and He can meet our needs.

The Apostle Paul concluded a paragraph by saying this about the Lord Jesus. ***Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, Ephesians 3:20.***

Can it be trusted? We all face the struggle of *'the theory verses the fact'*. We need to turn good theory into life fact. Some say 'it can't be done!' I beg to differ. After much trial and error, the Wright Brothers were able to fly- even if it was for a short distance. So why not with good theology? History shows us that many have gone before us and have discovered the essentials of faith and a faith walk. This doesn't mean that we do not struggle with it- we all struggle with faith. Do we need to struggle with God? Now that is the key!

What do we understand about the nature of God? **John 3:17 *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.***

God has a plan, one that involves the working out of His grace. Grace is something that we do not deserve- it is a gift. The very nature of our creation at the hands of God, makes us the perfect candidates for the Grace of God. God knows and understands our frailty better than we do. The Lord Jesus warns us about adversity and suffering in this life. Hear what the Apostle Peter says: **1 Peter:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*** **2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*** The Grace of God works in our lives, it is God's gift- it begins with the offer of salvation and a gift for living and it takes us into an eternity with God the Father. Don't just take my word for it! Check out history and the Biblical record of those who trusted God the Father with their life. **Con**

## Prayer Points

Please pray for:

- ◇ Our church family
- ◇ Those In Care: Ron Ratcliffe; Hugh Kirk; Joan Weber & Dawn Coleshill
- ◇ Janice and her son Steve
- ◇ Gail and Ray (Hong Kong) and for children & families in all 3 schools
- ◇ Jenny and Dave Rowe in USA: Adam and the Togo Group
- ◇ FCC Churches: *Manly Congregational Church*
- ◇ Church family members: *Trevor, Cally and Joseph Van Steenberg*
- ◇ God's leading and authority over decisions concerning our church
- ◇ God's leading concerning our need for Elders and Deacons
- ◇ Opportunity to employ an Assistant Pastor
- ◇ Romani Evangelical Congregational Church in Macedonia and their Pastor
- ◇ Pulse 94.1 FM and the effectiveness of Con's radio program
- ◇ Wisdom and opportunity to reach our community with the Gospel
- ◇ Persecuted Christians in *Syria*
- ◇ Gods intervention to enable doctors to make wise diagnoses for patients
- ◇ Con and Leonie for strength and improved health
- ◇ Roger for continued recovery
- ◇ Margaret, Dianne and family for God's peace and sustaining
- ◇ Dennis, appointment with heart specialist 23 April, and still suffering ongoing headaches and periodic seizures.
- ◇ Those suffering with Coronavirus and for eradication of the virus
- ◇ For those experiencing loneliness due to self isolation
- ◇ Janice Roworth, that she will get the right diagnosis and relief from pain
- ◇ Jennifer who has not been well, for a speedy recovery

## Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, ring or text Leonie 0428180355

**National call to prayer, daily at 7:00pm.** "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be faithful in prayer." Rom 12:12  
Pray that many would experience God as their refuge and help at this time.

**We encourage everyone to continue to support our church financially. Details provided on the back page of this newsletter.**