



Moderator
Rev David Baker

9 June 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Good on you and well done! As I look back over the past couple of months, I have a real sense of pride and delight in the way the church in Queensland—congregations, agencies, schools, Presbyteries, the Synod office—has adapted and expended some extraordinary efforts to continue to share the faith, hope and love of Jesus Christ.

In the face of what have been unprecedented challenges and circumstances during the pandemic, I have been inspired by the way that you have responded to these challenges with imagination and hope—from congregations finding new ways to worship, serve and witness, to agencies dealing with the complexities of health and aged care, to schools moving so quickly to online education and supporting students and families. These are just some examples of the amazing efforts I have seen across the life of the church.

But I am conscious that these efforts have come at a cost to individuals and teams; that leaders, staff, volunteers and people of our church have expended a great deal of energy at what may be experienced as high emotional, mental and physical cost. I'm conscious that for all the wonderful stories I alluded to above, there are other stories of loss and despair, of jobs lost, of relationships strained and of profoundly difficult challenges for survival for some of our congregations and entities.

I have heard these stories of pain and loss alongside the stories of hope and new possibility. And as much as I have (and I want to encourage you to) offered prayers of thanksgiving, there are also prayers of lament, of sadness. For many among us, these have been difficult times. But I believe that God is with us.

The challenges facing our church are, in many ways, analogous to those facing our communities and our country. We remain in the pandemic, and as has often been stated by government officials, the road out of this situation to find a new equilibrium will be long and difficult. Trying times still await us, and the next steps will not always be obvious, nor easy. As we have all experienced, the goalposts will shift often.

As a church we are working towards a common goal—to ensure that the church can emerge on the other side of the pandemic stronger, guided by the Holy Spirit with a continued commitment to sharing in God's mission in the life of the world. We will do that navigating within the frameworks our governments establish and with a commitment to caring for one another. And we will do that by constantly seeking the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit.

I thank you for your ongoing commitment and dedication to the ministry of the Uniting Church in Queensland. It is truly a privilege to be in the Moderator's chair during this time and to travel this road with you. I encourage you to continue to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit and think about how you can help support the work of the Uniting Church in our communities.

If you have any questions regarding ministry during COVID-19, please do not hesitate to contact your Presbytery Minister, line manager or the COVID-19 team within the Synod office via email (COVID19@ucaqld.com.au).

Every blessing,

Rev David Baker
Moderator
Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod