

Invitation to return to face-to-face worship

With our state having reached the milestone of 70% of eligible persons over 16 fully vaccinated, and the anticipated reaching of the 80% fully vaccinated milestone on October 29th, we now have the opportunity to allow more people attend our worship services.

Church Council has decided that from Sunday 31 October worship services and ceremonies are to be open only to those over 12 who have proof they are fully vaccinated, or medically exempt. Any children under 12 are NOT required to be vaccinated and are welcome to attend.

Furthermore, from 31 October all activities that take place in our buildings will require leaders and participants to be fully vaccinated, unless medically exempt. This decision has been taken to best serve the health and safety of the congregation and those in the community we interact with.

Proof of vaccination will be checked as part of the QR registration procedure done as attendees arrive and with which many have become familiar with over recent months. Having such proof is going to be a 'way of life' for us all in the immediate future in a wide variety of public settings.

What kind of proof is required? The most common forms are:

- Digital Vaccination Records (through MyGov or Medicare)
- Personal Immunisation records, or proof of vaccination cards issued at the time of vaccination Certificates linked to the Services Victoria (QR Code) Check-in.

From 6 pm on 12 November, you can no longer use a medical certificate as evidence of COVID-19 vaccination exemption. If you can't get any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines for medical reasons, your doctor needs to update your record on the Australian Immunisation Register to show that you have a medical exemption. Once your exemption has been processed, you can download your COVID-19 digital certificate. If you have a smartphone you can add your certificate to the Service Victoria app or download your immunisation history statement from myGov. Alternatively, if you don't have a smartphone, you ask your doctor to print your immunisation history statement, or provide a copy of the Australian Immunisation Register immunisation medical exemption form they used to register your exemption.

Once we have recorded that an attendee is fully vaccinated, we understand we should not need to see proof of vaccination from that person each subsequent week.

Those attending worship will still have to practice physical distancing (1.5 m) in terms of seating arrangements, but couples, families and people from the same household will be able to sit together. Wearing of face masks before, during and after the service will remain until this requirement is lifted.

It is possible that changes will be made to the Recovery Roadmap over and above what have been foreshadowed in the most recent State Government announcements. Church Council will endeavour to respond to any significant changes as quickly as possible.

If you have any questions or other concerns about the arrangements set out above please contact Rod Devenish (0428 945 721).