

## North Lake Macquarie Uniting Congregation

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G'day my Friends,

I hope you and your family are well. Many are no doubt 'fed-up' with lockdown and all that's associated with it. Some are certainly feeling lonely if isolated in their aged care room. These are testing times for us all. Imagine being a teenager and to all intents and purposes being 'grounded' for all these weeks. It's a difficult time for young and old. We will all be missing seeing our family especially for the likes of birthdays or the birth of a new baby. With the vaccine rollout there is the promised relaxing of restrictions, so the end is almost in sight. I am pleased to have had my double dose and hope you are all on track for yours.

There are many terrible stories of loss and heartache during these times which you will have heard of, or experienced yourselves... funerals with only 10 people permitted to attend or weddings, which were not permitted at all. I have a couple who have on 4 occasions had their wedding postponed. One couple is leaping at the opportunity of marriages being newly permitted and before anything changes I will be marrying them on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September. That is, of course, my wedding anniversary (while Catherine's wedding anniversary is on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September).

I continue to produce a Facebook video each week (also available to view on our church website), it's a 5 or 6 minutes talk with encouragement. While at the Willows on Saturday morning - handing over your generous donations to our work with Newcastle's homeless - I recorded my Facebook message from inside the church. I thought church members might like 'to be in church', as it were. I wanted to offer church members and others a moment of respite from life's upsets and world tragedies at the moment. I also wanted to offer an opportunity of stillness, and quietness and an opportunity to pray.

In the letter to the Ephesians (6:18) we are encouraged to pray for one another. This is a loving act which helps bind us together. Please may I encourage you to remember those who are alone, to pray for them and to even give them a call so as to keep in touch and encourage. You could even call someone you don't know particularly well.

We will soon be out of lockdown, we will soon be able to resume our regular outdoor, family and social activities. We will eventually be able to return to church.

*"Lift up your hearts: we lift them up to the Lord.*

*Be of good cheer: I rejoice in the Lord always.*

*Trust in the Lord: the Lord is my hope and salvation.*

*Praise be to God: I will sing of the Almighty's goodness unto me"*

*Peace be with you, (and also with you)*

*God bless, Kenneth.*