

# Hope Presbyterian and the COVID 19 Traffic Light System

	COVID 19 Traffic Light System		
	GREEN	ORANGE	RED
Record Keeping	Record Keeping mandatory		
Facemasks	Facemasks encouraged	Facemasks encouraged	Facemasks strongly encouraged
Vaccine Passport Gatherings	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	100
			1m physical distancing
Open Gathering #'s	100	50	25*
	1m physical distancing	1m physical distancing	1m physical distancing
	Hospitality	Contactless Hospitality	Contactless Hospitality

\*It appears this number has recently been altered by the Government on the 26 November 2021.

## BACKGROUND

Due to the COVID 19 Traffic light system being implemented on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, Hope Presbyterian has been looking at the opportunities of how to minister, lead and serve God, and our people at this time. Alongside Hope’s values some key principles underpinning our approach have been:<sup>1</sup>

- Prayerful Dependence on God.
- Unity in the gospel while a diversity of response.
- Caring for the vulnerable
- Urgency of evangelism
- Caring for our ministry teams
- Honouring the government
- Looking to our responsibilities not rights

<sup>1</sup> Some of these principles come from a resource made available to Hope Presbyterian called 'Letter to the Diocese – November 2021' from the Bishop of Confessing Anglicans.

It is important that we communicate to you and to each other that:

1. These are not permanent solutions.
2. At times the values we hold compete against each other in this conversation.

Our key outcomes are:

1. On principle, Hope Presbyterian desires to be an open ministry environment so that all can continue to have access to the good news of Jesus. We wish our churches to be open for all visitors, and we refrain, where possible, from contributing to the growing division in society that the new 'traffic light' system will necessarily cause.<sup>2</sup>
2. Hope Presbyterian will comply with current government COVID requirements so long as those requirements do not contravene the word of God.
3. We realise that each Hope Presbyterian site has differing levels of resourcing, ministry team and stages of community growth and the response might slightly differ. We are aware that simply doubling up all activities is unsustainable. We are also conscious that the West Melton building is opening on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December and the craving to use it is strong.

## **AIMS FOR HOPE PRESBYTERIAN**

The site management teams met on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November to specifically pray, discuss and brainstorm what the future looks like. There seemed to be no easy solutions, however it was identified that we play the hand we have in front of us, that we will not rush to make a permanent decision, and that the desired outcome may need to be reached in stages. After a night of prayer, the following themes were discerned and have been categorised under our values.

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<sup>2</sup> Wording borrowed and slightly altered from the 'Letter to the Diocese – November 2021'

## **1. God is our Foundation**

- a. To ensure we heed God's leading and remember his call to 'Get Ready' and 'Enter the Land'
- b. Stand strong in the Lord<sup>3</sup> and do good.<sup>4</sup>
- c. Allow for Spirit inspired and empowered creativity and to seek His creative strategy.
- d. Strong reminder of rest and to 'work smarter not harder.' This new season must include sustainability.

## **2. People are our Priority<sup>5</sup>**

- a. Enable and encourage all to be able to participate in worship where possible<sup>6</sup>
- b. Create new opportunities for connection.
- c. Pull together resources and to have a unity of heart and practical out-working of ministry.<sup>7</sup>
- d. The value and importance of hospitality/welcome.

## **3. Holiness is our Pursuit**

- a. To uphold unity and to push back against disunity and criticism.
- b. Confession/repentance for not heeding word of the Lord earlier.
- c. Where is our focus and gaze of our hearts? A reminder to focus on the eternal.
- d. What are the treasures God is inviting us to step into and participate in with Him?

## **4. Sharing the gospel of Jesus is our purpose.**

- a. Recognise the keen sense of opportunity and possibilities, both for our church family and in reaching out to our community.<sup>8</sup>
- b. This is not just for now or temporary but a long-term call of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Psalm 20:8 They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise and stand firm.

<sup>4</sup> Titus 2:7: In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

<sup>5</sup> Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. <sup>3</sup> Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 10:24-25: And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and charitable deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and more as you see the Day approaching.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 133.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

The overwhelming sense was this was a time to re-define who we are as a church and choose some specific areas to invest our resources into. The congregational survey assisted in coming to this conclusion.

## **NEXT STEPS**

With this in mind, it made sense to the team to use the upcoming social landscape (public holidays, summer break) to assist in leading and transitioning Hope Church through the immediate future while creating room to assess the full impact of the Traffic Light system. We have based our approach on having both passport and open services at the same location, and on the ability to gather teams to assist with live recording and Hope Online.

### Sunday Gatherings

As we work with the new parameters, we want to create opportunities

1. For people to be together for **worship**. This will occur through:
  - a. A menu of service options from the 5<sup>th</sup> December to the 24<sup>th</sup> December.
  
2. To provide opportunities for **connection** over the holiday season. This will occur through:
  - a. **Home Online** for 25<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Day) and 26<sup>th</sup> December (Sunday).
  - b. Our pre-recorded summer series *Nice To Meet You* is where we will encourage people to meet together in homes. This will be supplemented by watch parties at sites.
  
3. To enter 2022 a focus on **prayer**. This will occur through:
  - a. Our 3 weeks of prayer series 'Dangerous Prayer' and will be the catalyst for joining together in prayer.
  - b. Services will return to the menu option for people.

Please see the following table that outline the key dates and elements:

	Across Site	Hornby	Rolleston	West Melton / Halkett
Create Opportunities for people to <b>WORSHIP</b> in person - Key focus in person				
15th December (midweek)		10am Passport		
19th December	Streamed Service 9am	9am: Passport (Aud) 10:45am Open (Reima) 7pm: Open (Aud)	Sat 6:30pm: Open Sun 10am: Passport	Sat 6:30pm: Open Sun 9:30am: Passport
24th December^	Streamed Services (s) - TBC	6pm: Family Passport (Aud) 9pm: Classical Passport (Aud)	Services @ Halkett, Hornby, West Melton	Halkett 9pm: Open WM: 10:15pm Open WM: 11:15pm Passport
25th December	Hope Online	9am Watch Party @ sites** (Steve to preach)		
Opportunities for people to <b>GATHER</b> in person - Key focus online services / Growth Groups				
26th December	Hope Online	Watch Party @ sites** (Jess to preach - Transition's)		
2nd January	Pre-recorded Service	Watch Party @ sites** (Mark to preach - Jonah)		
9th January	Pre-recorded Service	Watch Party @ sites** (Marty to preach - Gideon)		
16th January	Pre-recorded Service	Watch Party @ sites** (Steve to preach - Benaiah)		
Begin 2022 with 3 Weeks of <b>PRAYER AND WORSHIP</b> - Key Focus new group push <i>(please note adjustments may occur to these times / days)</i>				
23rd January (3wks of prayer)	Streamed Service	9am: Passport (Aud) 10:45am Open (Reima) 7pm: Open (Aud)	Sat 6:30pm: Open Sun 10am: Passport	Sat 6:30pm: Open Sun 9:30am: Passport
^ Please note some of these details are being worked through.				
** Sites may wish to do live service elements - worship / preaching - and will confirm Passport or Open services in due course.				

## **Key Questions:**

*I am unvaccinated, does this mean I can no longer attend Sunday services?*

We would love to have you attend any of our open services across any Hope site and no vaccination passport will be required. These services will be subject to number restrictions under the 'traffic-light' system and therefore all attendees will need to register through our registration process.

*I am vaccinated, do I have to attend a Passport Service?*

You are welcome to attend any service across any Hope site although due to demand there may be times the open services are full.

*Will I need to register for services?*

We will continue to ask those attending open services to register to assist with numbers and also in meeting our requirements.

For those attending passport services passport will need to be sighted and scanning the QR code on your NZ COVID Tracer app will be sufficient. If you do not have the NZ COVID Tracer app sign in sheets will be provided.

What about midweek gatherings / ministries?

Based upon what we know now, and bearing in mind that midweek gatherings and ministries will cease for the holiday season we envisage the following:

<b>RED</b>	At <b>RED</b> most midweek ministries and gatherings will occur online
<b>GREEN and ORANGE</b>	A mixture of in person and online connections are likely. To assist here are some general principles
Online Services	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Online Service will become an increasingly core element to our response.</b></p> <p>Based upon our own desire to serve the Hope Network, and the feedback from the survey, it is timely that we review our online ministry. This will shift to a hybrid of pre-recorded, livestream and Hope Online services. This is recognising that the Livestream component is easier on the tech team yet we have a greater need to invest more time and intentional energy</p>
Growth Groups	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Growth Groups will become an increasingly core element to our response.</b></p> <p>In so far as possible, all groups are open to all and will not require a vaccine certificate. We also encourage conversation to be had with group members and the pastoral team are available to assist. It is possible groups may choose to meet via zoom, or in person if it is safe to do so.</p>
Prayer Groups	In so far as possible, all prayer groups are open to all and will not require a vaccine certificate. We also encourage conversation to be had with group members and the pastoral team are available to assist. It is possible groups may choose to meet via zoom, or in person if it is safe to do so.
Children's Ministries	Will be open to all. Where we have passport services all helpers will be vaccinated. Vaccination wont be necessary for volunteers at open services.*
Youth Groups	Junior and Senior Youth Groups will be open to all and will not require a vaccine certificate.*
Gathered Ministries (men's, women's)	In so far as possible, all gathered ministries are open to all and will not require a vaccine certificate. We encourage conversation's to be had with group members and the pastoral team are available to assist. It is possible groups may choose to meet via zoom, or in person if it is safe to do so.*

*\*Please note this may change as the impact of the Traffic Light System, and the new risk assessment tool assist in determining if we are a mandate business.*

What about pastoral care?

We are working with a reference group made up of medical practitioners, health and safety, and legal experts. As part of our response, we are determining safe and effective pastoral care responses to people looking at:

- The specific need of the person being contacted,
- Keeping our people safe
- Minimising the risk of any spread of COVID
- Remaining at our post as light bearers and representatives of Christ.

## **CONCLUSION**

We acknowledge that none of this is our preference, but we are simply trying to work within the government mandates, and we ask for, and thank you for your understanding, encouragement, and support.

At Hope Presbyterian we are committed to lead, serve, and minister in this COVID context in a way that best looks after all our people, upholds the biblical mandate to continue to meet together yet is safe. We wish to provide a menu of options so that those who are health compromised have an opportunity to participate as well as those within our community who do not feel comfortable receiving the vaccine. We continue to be thoughtful of how we can make the most of other ministry opportunities. We ask that you continue to pray as we sense and ask God for his leading in a new season.

With thanks,

Steve Talbot

Interim Senior Pastor