

# Three things on a Thursday - 27 January

written by Tim Palmer | 27 January 2022

*It's been a while since I sent one of these "Three things" pastoral emails. But as we continue through changing times where regular communication is critical, I felt that this would be a helpful way to do this. From next week "Three things on a Thursday" will also include regular communication on behalf of our leadership team.*

## **1. Red-traffic lights and Sunday services**

Just to recap: you will have seen the regular reminders of the decision to remain online only until the end of January. And as I described in my pastoral letter at the end of the year, we anticipated that we would assess a range of different factors, including the government announcement on the week of January 17<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.franklinbaptist.org.nz/christmas-letter-from-pastor-tim/>

Yet in the last 5 days, a lot more has developed, with the shift back to Red-traffic light, and the presence of Omicron in our direct neighbourhood for more than a week. Guidelines have changed, with implications on our decisions and the availability of key people.

Unfortunately, the immediate direction that I hoped to see us move toward in February (a quick return to gathering onsite on Sundays), now has to be re-evaluated in light of the new situation we find ourselves. There has been extensive consideration this week amongst staff, leadership, management, and tech teams. We're also praying, listening to people, and discerning how God is leading us at this time. Based on these factors, I'll be making my pastoral recommendation to the leadership team as we meet on Tuesday night.

*Please continue to pray for us in these decisions. I am very inspired by the people who God has placed in our church, and the collective wisdom of these teams who are committed to care for the whole church. We will keep you updated.*

Yes, I'm aware that many other churches have made a range of different decisions already.

Yes, I'm aware of churches that are now breaking apart because of the way things have been handled. And others where this has gone smoothly.

Yes, I'd love to be worshipping together as soon as possible too.

And Yes, I'm conscious of new factors this week that affect our ability to do this safely and sustainably.

As a pastor I'm grateful for this time of caring discernment, as we seek God's leading for our specific context, so that this may be a church that genuinely embraces all.

## **2. The Well - a mid-week mini-service**

On that note, I really feel prompted to open up a few mid-week worship spaces that seek to connect with the most vulnerable. A deep well of refreshment in worship, prayer and God's word.

I have three groups on my heart that I consider to be very vulnerable:

1. The unvaccinated who feel isolated
2. Those who don't have the technology to connect with our online options
3. Those with health situations that mean they can *only* be in small settings with vaccinated people

I've come to the conclusion that the only way to care for all, is to offer a range of settings. Over the next 2 weeks we'll be offering 4x mid-week mini-worship spaces to cater for these situations.

- **Tuesday 1 Feb - 9am - Open to all.** Limit 25 pre-registered.
- **Wednesday 2 Feb - 7pm - Open to all.** Limit 25 pre-registered.
- **Tuesday 8 Feb - 9am - Open to all.** Limit 25. Focus on those who don't have internet access. Therefore, no online pre-registration. Phone invitations - let me know if you are one of those who hasn't been able to access online services, or if you have someone on your heart who needs this.
- **Wednesday 9 Feb - 7pm - Vaccinated only.** Limit 25 pre-registered to keep numbers small. Focus on a safer space for those with health concerns. Mandatory face coverings.

The four services will basically be the same, as we seek to connect with different people each time.

It would include a worship component; bible reflection; corporate prayer; and offering personal prayer.

I'm looking forward to these settings of refreshment.

### **3. A song to share - Same God by Elevation worship**

This month we have been looking at Old Testament characters who reveal God's blessing to the nations.

Today I've had this song on repeat (thanks Josh Temu!).

<https://www.facebook.com/elevationworship/posts/4854317081274168>

Today I'm calling on the God of Jacob, Moses, Mary, and David.

*O God, my God I need You.*

*O Rock, O Rock of Ages I'm standing on your faithfulness.*

*You are the same God*

*You moved in power then, God move in power now*

*You are the same God*

May this song be a blessing to you today, as you lean into God's presence.

Grace and peace

Tim