

## Synod postponed for 2020 due to COVID-19

Anglican Church Southern Queensland General Manager Tim Reid this week confirmed that the 2020 ordinary session of Synod, which had been tentatively re-scheduled from June to September, has been postponed until next year.

The June monthly meeting of Diocesan Council considered whether Synod should proceed given recent months of COVID-19 related restrictions and the likelihood of ongoing restrictions around numbers for gatherings.

On the advice of Diocesan Council, the Archbishop asked that steps be taken to postpone the 2020 ordinary session of Synod to June 2021.

Mr Reid said the decision was made after considering COVID-19 restrictions and the associated difficulties of holding gatherings of over 400 people in an enclosed space, while meeting social distancing requirements.

"It is difficult to anticipate if or when these restrictions may be eased sufficiently for us to meet," Mr Reid said in an email sent directly to Synod members.

"We have considered the complexity of usual Synod business and concluded that a full session by way of a virtual meeting is not practical. The Synod Canon mandates that an ordinary session be held in each year.

"In order to postpone the ordinary session, the Archbishop will call a special session of Synod, likely to be during September 2020, with the only item of business being a proposed Canon which will enable the ordinary session to be postponed.

"As there will only be this single item of business, our intention is that the special session can proceed with a bare quorum of members, but we are looking to make provision for any members of Synod who wish to attend to do so by video conference."

Further information will be sent out to members before the special session of Synod with details regarding how people can attend the meeting if they choose to do so.

Mr Reid said elections for office holders will also be deferred until 2021. Other decisions regarding aspects of Synod business, such as the timing and method of Commission reports, are still being finalised.

"I would like to thank everyone associated with Synod for their understanding and patience while we work through all of the arrangements," Mr Reid said.

## Sunday Devotion: 19 July 2020, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Belonging changes everything

**Main Readings:** [Genesis 28.10-19a](#); [Psalm 139.1-11, 23-24](#); [Romans 8.12-25](#); [Matthew 13.24-30 \(31-33\), 36-43](#) [[Isaiah 44.6-8](#); [Psalm 86.11-17](#)]

**Supplementary Readings:** [Psalm 80](#); [Matthew 12.43-50](#); [Genesis 29.1-14](#); [Psalm 86.4-13](#); [Romans 9.30-10.4](#)

“For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ” ([Romans 8.15](#))

Years ago, I met a family who were spending large amounts of time and money so their children could compete in state and national level sport. I asked them why. The mum replied, “For belonging. I played sport for Australia for 10 years. I knew I belonged to a team and that knowledge kept me from going off the rails. I want that for my kids.” Belonging is important.

In this passage, we are told those who are led by the Spirit of God are not slaves but are adopted into God’s family. There is a surety that comes from being part of a family that can never be taken away. The passage goes on to remind us that when we suffer, or are glorified, we do so as part of God’s family.

One of the differences between being a child in a family and being a slave is that sense of unconditionally belonging. A child knows they belong to the family. A slave is owned. A slave does things because they are told, with a fear of punishment. A family member is motivated by unconditionally love, to work for the greater good of the family, often without being told.

Belonging changes everything. People make huge sacrifices of money and time so that they can have that sense of belonging, yet we have it for free in Jesus. The gift of belonging to Jesus’ family erases fear. This is a gift worth sharing and a gift our community is looking for.