

Messages of Hope

The City of Greater Dandenong's Interfaith Network is the oldest interfaith network in Australia and has been working to promote peace, harmony and understanding for 31 years.

Greater Dandenong is itself recognised as the most culturally diverse community in Australia. With residents from 157 different nations following more than 100 different faiths, ours is a truly global city.

Council is proud of the enduring, equal yet independent partnership it shares with the Interfaith Network. Last year the Network celebrated its 30th anniversary with the launch of the coffee table book *Many Faiths, One People*. The launch was held at Dandenong Library and celebrated the diversity of our city.

In times of uncertainty many people turn to faith for comfort and guidance, but even if you don't follow a particular faith, these messages from Greater Dandenong's faith leaders may contain words of wisdom to help you through.

Baha'i

"Never feel alone, as together we are all working through this challenging time. As we look to our inner being, to our connection with God, we will find through Him, hope, strength, comfort and love, for all." - Agnes Kean.

Brahma Kumaris

"I keep an aim to stay present and connected to my essence of peace. I know that this peace will reach my beloved ones and ultimately the whole world, providing comfort, strength, hope and clarity." – Sister Jacqueline Russell.

Buddhist

"We are suffering because of the Coronavirus. In the name of Buddha, let us be compassionate and kind to one another. Let's stand with each other, journeying together and we will overcome this pandemic." – Venerable Ol Sam, Wat Buddharangsi, President of Cambodian Association of Victoria Inc.

"The best way to take care of society is to take care of the present moment." – Venerable Thich Thien Tam, Hoa Nghiem Buddhist Temple.

Christian

"Families, faith communities, neighbourhoods and a host of other groups have been most creative during this time of isolation and distancing. We have been looked after by so many generous people during these challenging times. With gratitude, let's not forget to say 'thank you' to all those who work to keep us healthy in body, mind and spirit." Anita Davine, St John Vianney Catholic Parish.

"Recently, the world has been shaken by the truly devastating outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. Thousands of people have lost their lives and millions remain infected. Families and Friends stay separated and the economies are almost collapsing. The world appears to be falling apart. Despite all the uncertainty, people have continued to be resilient and hopeful. God, through the prophet Isaiah comforts us asking us to not fear or be afraid for God is with us and will strengthen, help and uphold us with a victorious right hand." – Reverend Paul Aleu Dau, Springvale Uniting Church.

“As our community reels with the effects of COVID-19, we reach out in love to those affected and lift our prayers to God for relief, comfort and healing, looking forward to better days ahead.” – Reverend Graeme Peters, St James Anglican Church.

“As people of hope throughout our history, we believe that we will overcome this time of uncertainty. As people who have experienced so many hardships throughout our history, let us remain hopeful that at the end of the tunnel there is a great light. Let us help one another and look after one another. Let us join the wider community in solidarity in caring for the lonely and vulnerable in our city. Stay blessed and protected.” – Reverend Deacon George Piech Meat, Community Chaplain, South Sudanese Catholic Community.

Hindu

“I know the Coronavirus pandemic has gripped the entire world with no boundaries. The loss of life is increasing; the entire world is watching. I pray that God might free us from this pandemic and life might serenely resume its normal course. ‘OHM THAT SATH’.” – Sivarasi Rajaratna Sarma Premakantha Kurukkal (High Priest).

Jewish

“When Jewish people meet, they will wish you Shalom, a friendly and peaceful greeting. In times of crisis we need to be responsive to each other. As a multicultural city we believe in our unity and faith to find the silver lining.” – Roz Blades AM.

Muslim

“Islam aims to make life happy and easier for humankind, and to alleviate their pain, sorrow and temptations. God says: “Indeed, after hardship comes relief”. Also, he calls us to always do good, saying “Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good”. Let us do good and hope for the coming good.” – Imam Ismet Purdic, Bosnian Mosque.

“The beautiful nature of compassion is a virtue we all possess. In times of hardship, patience and support is a key factor in maintaining physical and spiritual wellbeing. Let’s remember that goodness made with a sincere intention is seen as an act of kindness.” – Imam Mehmet Salih Dogan, Emir Sultan Mosque.

Sikh

“During a time that we cannot go out, let us use this opportunity to go within to connect to the divine. God mercifully takes care of each of his creations and this world. Have faith, our creator will help us through this adversity, as he always does.” – Jasbir Singh Suropada.

Sri Sathya Sai Organisation

“Right now life is difficult: isolated we become sad, anxious and angry. Humans need to engage themselves in some action or other, either physically, mentally, or both. We can do this together. Light the lamp of love in your hearts and send it to others, with your thoughts or love, impart courage and confidence to others in need. Together we pray for hope, that as a community we will unite for the upliftment of all people and commit ourselves to good deeds.”

Visit <https://www.interfaithnetwork.org.au/> to find out more about the Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network.