



Sunday 22nd July 2018

Dear Congregation,

Last week, the 15th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia decided to hold two equal and distinct statements of belief on marriage. This decision will allow ministers and celebrants in the Uniting Church the freedom to conduct or to refuse to conduct same-gender marriages. (Please see Moderator's Pastoral Note for more details:

<https://unitingchurchsacreatesend1.com/t/ViewEmail/i/9F6801EE585747422540EF23F30FEDED>).

Within our congregation this decision may have been met with a variety of responses: celebration, disappointment, indifference - whilst others are still processing how they feel.

On Tuesday evening, the decision by the Assembly was discussed at our Church Council meeting. Each church council has the right to determine whether same-gender marriage services take place on their premises. To aid in our decision making, Church Council has decided to enter into 40 days of prayer (commencing Monday the 23rd of July until Friday the 31st of August) to consider the way forward for us at Athelstone Uniting Church. We invite you to join with us in this period of prayer and discernment. Attached is a guide that could be helpful to support our prayers through the next 40 days. At the end of this period, Church Council hopes to have discerned whether same-gender marriages will be able to be conducted at Athelstone Uniting Church.

Linda and members of Church Council are available if you would like prayer, or to discuss your response to the Assembly's decision. In particular, if there is something that you discern through your prayer, that would help Council make its decision, we ask that you let us know by Sunday the 2nd of September.

We thank you for joining with us as we discern the way forward with an attitude of grace and love.

Blessings in Christ,

Victoria Pederick
Chairperson

Rev. Linda Driver
Minister

On behalf of your Church Council:

Michael O'Connell
Glen Luestner
Jeff Dry
Bob Stevenson
Di Curtis
Eric Hurrell
Chris Pritchard
David Riggall