



18 March 2021

Dear Friends

I am writing to you once more concerning COVID-19, but not to talk of the challenges of lockdowns; I write with gratitude for all those who have kept us safe, and I am looking towards the vaccines that will soon be offered to all of us.

We are now a year on from the first case of COVID reaching Aotearoa New Zealand and the introduction of our 'new normal'.

Over the past months, we have been through uncertainty with the ups and downs of changing alert levels. We have been saddened by the COVID related deaths in our country; and concerned by the affect COVID could and has had on the health and finances of family, friends, and communities.

We have missed those we cannot be with due to restrictions on gatherings, and our borders being closed to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents.

We have joined in prayer for those who have not been as fortunate as us – the millions overseas who have lost loved ones to this terrible infectious disease.

Reflecting on the past year, I know we are all so grateful and thankful for our medical staff, border workers, managed isolation and quarantine staff, and essential workers who have served us all so well. Continue to hold them in your prayers, we have not defeated COVID yet.

Since the pandemic began, we have heard many speak about the importance of a vaccine, and soon vaccines will be widely available here.

It is important we all access accurate information about the vaccines in preparation for the national NZ COVID-19 Immunisation Programme.

To this end, the Interchurch Bioethics Council (ICBC) has produced a paper to assist our understanding of the vaccines, and a copy is attached and also available on [our website](#). This paper will also be available in te reo Māori and Samoan in due course.

I commend the ICBC paper to you. I encourage everyone to be well informed as the vaccines become available to us all.

Blessings



Right Rev Fakaofu Kaio
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand