



United Church in Solomon Islands
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Press Statement

The Stand of the United Church in Solomon Islands on COVID19 Vaccination

The United Church in Solomon Islands has always taken a very positive and supportive stance of the view, policy and strategic actions of the present government regarding COVID19. When COVID19 became a global pandemic, and from the time the government declared a State of Emergency, the UCSI has been proactive and active in its advocacy and educational awareness efforts, utilising the wide reach of its presence and network. While church members were asked to pray fervently for God's protection, they were also encouraged to listen to and obey instructions from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The UCSI recognises the reality that COVID19 has crossed into our borders, and affirms the fact that all Solomon Islanders and expatriates who reside/work in our country are vulnerable.

The United Church in Solomon Islands holds firmly to the truth that grounded faith and sound medical-scientific advice are not enemies! They are companions on the journey of and toward wellness and wholeness. The church believes that wisdom and knowledge are from God, including medical-scientific discoveries and breakthroughs. In this light researches into, discoveries and development of COVID19 vaccines are manifestations of such knowledge and wisdom. They are answers to the prayers of all God's people. Life is God's gift, and all that affirms, saves, protects, nurtures and advances this one life is within God's vision for life to thrive on Earth. Contrary to the many negatives that people say, vaccines – including COVID19 vaccines – are life forces within the vastness and depth of God's immeasurable loving kindness and generosity, which science continues to tap and harness for the wellness and furtherance of human life.

Faith is vital to Christian life and living. Yet, without appropriate action, faith means nothing – it is dead! COVID19 is more a medical infliction than a crisis of faith! COVID19 is not about choosing between faith or taking the shot! It is about both faith and taking the vaccine shot! Taking the vaccine shot validates and actualises faith during these COVID19 times. Leaders of the UCSI who serve at the church headquarters have all been fully vaccinated. Many other church leaders and members have also received their two vaccine shots.

“Love your neighbour as you love yourself” is a Christian imperative! In COVID19 times, “your neighbour” includes infants and children and youths who are under 18 years old and, therefore, not eligible for the vaccine shot! Taking the vaccine shot is a duty of love for neighbour! “Do no harm. Do the right thing. Do the good thing.” Obviously, these are ethical wisdom from our cultural and traditional moorings. These are also ethical principles from our Christian heritage. Taking the vaccine shot is the best and wisest ethical choice anyone can make during COVID19 times. *Emmanuel* means “God with us”. This “God with us” is best told and seen when we demonstrate God's protective, saving and healing presence to our families and communities by doing the right and good thing that does no harm to them – that is, by getting the COVID19 vaccine today!