



# RANDBURG METHODIST CHURCH

Resident Minister  
Rev. Mantima Thekiso

P O BOX 4028  
RANDBURG  
2125

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19 March 2020

Randburg Methodist Church Community

RE: Internal Communique in light of the current developments of the spread of the Coronavirus

## Preamble:

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in our country and the containment measures announced by the president; which were further reiterated by the office of the Presiding Bishop in the communique shared on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we have had to review and amend our scheduling of meetings and services, in order to adhere to the guidelines issued.

After extensive deliberations, the Church Executive, in consultation with our panel of Health Care Professionals we agreed to put in effect a number of changes. These changes are meant to reduce activity and number of people on the church premises at any given time, reduce our frequency of our meeting as a community in order to mitigating against any possible spread of the virus in our community, both as RandMeth and also the wider communities we belong to.

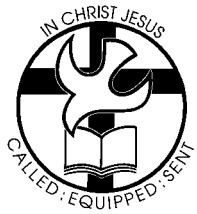
This is not meant to create any sense of panic in the RandMeth community, but to remind us all to keep the faith, pray for God's intervention and proactively participate in reducing the risk of the virus spread as much as possible. We have had to therefore limit the frequency of our person-to-person interactions. As much as these changes will impact the routine and culture of our community, we need to remember that this should not negatively affect our spiritual journey and connexion as people of faith. Therefore, we will continue to share material for weekly reflections and recordings of our sermons for continuous sharing and reflection beyond the Sunday moment. These measures will be reviewed as the situation unfolds. There will be regular updates on all our social media and other communication platforms.

Effective as of the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, please note the following:

### 1. Church Services

- The president of the nation and the MCSA at this stage have not implemented a complete ban on weekly Sunday worship services. Therefore, adjustments made are to allow frequent times of short worship services to reduce our numbers as much as possible, at any given time, to less than 100 people per service and in the precinct. We will therefore have services at Randburg Methodist Church at our usual time:
  - a. 07h45 English
  - b. 09h30 English

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- c. 11h30 Vernacular Service
- d. 14h00 Shona with sermon in English
- e. 18h00 Contemporary, with video and discussion

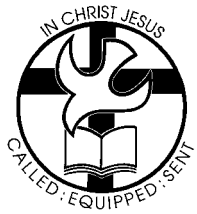
- All services will be limited strictly to 1 hour.
- For hygiene purposes, we will be receiving collection at entry points before and after the service. This will enable us all to sanitize our hands immediately after handling money.
- In addition, congregants are hereby reminded, and are encouraged to continue giving by other means available to them, such as EFT and Snap Scan.
- All congregants are kindly requested to leave the property swiftly once the service has ended to allow the cleaning team to sanitize the sanctuary and high-traffic surfaces for the next service.
- All services will be capped to a maximum of 100 congregants ONLY. This is in line with the presidential edict banning gatherings of more than 100 people. This number includes babies and children. Once the limit has been reached, we request of congregants to attend the next service. We encourage that we all spread out through the available services to release pressure, in terms of numbers, in other services. This is a special note to the 9h30 and 11h30 service as those services do exceed 100 on a normal Sunday.
- There will be no tea/coffee served after any of the services.
- Congregants are requested to attend 1 service only on any given Sunday.
- You are humbly requested to adhere to the social distancing guidelines and to spread across the sanctuary as far from each other as is possible, leaving a distance of about 1meter from the next person.
- The above spacing guidelines do not apply to families attending service together. Family groups are encouraged to sit together.
- We request that all direct contact between congregants be stopped. This will require us to use other creative ways of sharing the peace and greeting one another.

We request that all congregants make use of the hand sanitizer dispensers prior to entering the sanctuary.

All baptismal services hereby postponed until further notice.

## 2. Gatherings and Meetings

- All gatherings deemed non-essential are hereby suspended until further notice.
- Mission group meetings are encouraged to take place using electronic-meeting portals such as Zoom and WhatsApp and avoid person-to-person contact meetings. The communications team will be able to assist in guiding leaders on how to set these up.



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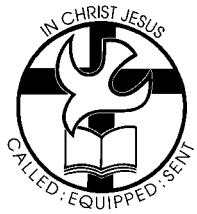
- All organisation meetings are hereby suspended for the next two weeks. Leaders of organisations will be advised after two weeks on how to best proceed.
- Sunday School, Teen Church and Friday night youth will not take place during school recess.

## 3. Bible Study groups/Class Meetings

- Bible studies and small groups may still meet however groups will need to guarantee the social distancing and hygiene requirements that need to be applied.
- If home facilities are not adequate, the church halls can be used however venues will need to be booked through the church office in order to manage the number of people on the property at a given time.
- Bible Study groups and Class Meetings that usually meet on Sunday will need to meet on one of the days during the week as Class meetings on Sundays after services will not be possible during this time.

## 4. Maintaining Community

- Those who are feeling unwell and/or have flu or cold symptoms are hereby advised to self-isolate and remain at home during this high-risk period. We will find a way to share materials and/or recordings of our sermons.
- The elderly, those with compromised or vulnerable immune system, those with chronic illnesses, persons with pre-existing health conditions and/or are identified by their doctors to fall within the high-risk group and expectant mothers are hereby humbly requested not to attend church services during this high-risk period.
- We request that if you fall under those who need to be in 'precautionary isolation' i.e. those listed above, please inform the office to allow for pastoral care to continue to be extended to you and your family. The last thing we would want at this time is to lose our connexion as a community.
- In the event that a congregant tests positive for the Coronavirus, and have been attending the church services and activities, we ask that the office be informed immediately so that the necessary precautions can be put in place.
- The office will operate on a half day from 08h30 to 13h00 until further notice.
- The Ferngrove Care Centre will be closed but counselling will continue to happen through telephonic means.
- Leaders of small groups, Bible Studies and Classes are also encouraged to keep track of the member and the Pastoral team will remain available to assist and guide where necessary.



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## 5. Economic impact and considerations

- We acknowledge that members of our congregation may already be feeling the economic pinch during this time and we assure the congregation that we will further engage and implement cost cutting measures in areas where possible during this time.
- We wish to implore you that you continue giving generously to the work of the church through planned giving and Sunday offering as we depend on every amount received.

## 6. Call for prayer and Unity

- We wish to call on you to engage in a moment of prayer each day at 12h00 noon for our country and the world during this difficult time. We will share prayer points and scriptures weekly for these prayer times. We ask that you pray wherever you will be at that particular time and encourage those who will be with you to also join in.

We apologies for any inconvenience caused by these new measures but wish to state that as a church we need to lead in the fight to contain the spread of the virus. We are our brothers and sisters' keeper and therefore need to protect in every way not only ourselves individually but all members of our community. Therefore, we ask for greater care and patience towards one another.

These measures will be reviewed in 2 weeks and any revised measures will be communicated. This will also include communication regarding our Holy Week and Easter Services.

Warmest regards,

Rev. Mantima Thekiso  
Resident Minister