



The Glen Methodist Church

Keeshond Street Garsfontein ~ PO Box 905-1304, Garsfontein, 0042

Tel (012) 348 5198 / 9

Ministers: Rev Smanga Bosman 072 267 3167; Rev Dr Wessel Bentley 082 374 4360 ~ Youth

Pastor Pastor Kyle Garrett 082 859 0756

Email: admin@glenmethodist.co.za

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Pastoral letter to members of the Glen Methodist Church

Dear people of God,

Greetings to you all! I write this letter to you on day 45 of Lockdown, and to continue to pray that all of us in the Country will do our best to flatten the curve of this pandemic.

We have been asked by many of you regarding the possibility of having virtual Communion services. Since we are part of a Connexional Church, we can't just take decisions unilaterally, but as part of the wider Methodist Church of Southern Africa. It is for that reason that I have asked Wessel, who is part of DEWCOM (Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Commission) in our Church, to brief us on the latest stance of the MCSA, which is still in discussion regarding this important part of who we are as a Community of Christ's followers. Here is the summary of the discussions thus far:

Communion as a communal meal

When we host a dinner party at our house, it is a very special occasion. Like all people, we pull out all the stops to prepare, set the scene and to make sure that when we do sit down to feast, it will be a memorable event. Now, imagine that the guests phone to say that there is some delay. Out of respect, we wait for them. We do not go ahead and eat. If we did, we cannot simply smile and pretend as if nothing happened. It just won't be good table manners.

This is a silly illustration, and I am sure that many holes can be found in this analogy, but I think it speaks to our situation. When we join in Holy Communion, it is a special moment whereby we are all invited to the Lord's Table. We are the guests – all of us. Now, it so happens that many people have access to the internet, have personal smart devices and are able to join together in virtual worship, but there are many, many people who do not and cannot. If we go to the Table, there will be some empty chairs. Their places are set and we know that we will be together again, but they are not here yet. It is not their fault. If we continue with the meal without our brothers and sisters, who we know are supposed to be with us, but can't, we would not be real community.

With this in mind, and emphasizing the importance of community and friendship at this time, the Methodist Church is choosing to set the Table, making sure everything is in place, but not to start with the meal. Those who are able to, can join us in the "lounge" so long, while we constantly try and keep in touch with those who cannot be with us in virtual space. But we are going to wait, out of respect.

So, here is a suggestion: Every Sunday, the ministers will prepare a Table, visible for all to see. We will continue in worship, we will acknowledge those who are not with us, and we will anticipate our togetherness. How special that moment will be, when we are all together again, feasting at the Lords' Table? It is a time of anticipation, and seeing the Table during our times of worship will be a "foretaste of the Heavenly banquet, prepared for all humankind".

Church Repairs

The recent storm damage at our Church gave us an opportunity to do some repairs that were long in the pipeline. We are happy to announce that the insurance covered most of these repairs, with only about R16000.00 worth of repair costs not covered by them. If anyone would like to contribute towards this cost, please feel free to deposit your contribution into the Glen Methodist Church bank account included in this communique, clearly marked "Church Roof Repairs" in the reference section.

Preparing for Return to Church Building

We recognize that we will not be under lockdown forever, hence we are setting up a team of people, mostly medical, to start assembling equipment that will be necessary when that time comes. If you would like to be part of that team, please contact Dr Trevor Terblanche. His contact details are: 012 9988428

In conclusion

Again, just a word of thanks to all of you for your active participation, and to those who have started using the Snap Scan app to make your contribution to the Church funds, this does make a difference, as we need to continue meeting our financial obligations as a Church during this difficult time. The banking details remain: FNB, Lynwood. Branch code – 252 045; Account No: 546 043 10688, and include either your name or surname or planned giving number as reference, and Church Roof Repairs if you give towards this.

Shalom

Smanga and Wessel

