



The Glen Methodist Church

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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 127 of Lockdown, and as you might be aware, the number of confirmed Covid 19 positive cases have spiked tremendously, with quite a high number of deaths having been reported already. We continue to pray for those who have lost loved ones due to this terrible pandemic, and those who have tested positive, praying that they recover soon.

The sad thing though, is that in our Country, we now also have to deal with other evils that have arisen and need our prayers. The rising levels in Gender Based Violence, leading to women and children being killed on a daily basis, the senseless and brutal Farm murders, affecting food production that is so needed during this time, and bringing about deep pain and uncertainty to families affected, and the rampant corruption that affects the very help that needs to go out to people in need. Please pause a while and join me in this prayer, that was written by one of our Colleagues, the Rev Dr Roger Scholtz, as we think of those who have lost their loved ones:

“Gracious Provider, food security is so fundamental to our ability to live and work as human beings. As the blight of hunger continues to spread during this time of pandemic, so the crucial importance of nutritious, affordable food that’s available to all is being spotlighted again. We weep before the shameful travesty that in this land of plenty there are children being stunted by malnutrition and youths who are forced to rummage for scraps; that in this land of abundance there are many who have been reduced to begging and more and more who are literally dying of starvation. Forgive us, we pray! As we bring this complex need before you, so we pray today for one specific and vital part of this equation – the farmers and farm labourers who grow our food. Theirs is sacred work upon which we all depend. We thank you for all that they do – for the way in which they live close to the earth, so attuned to the changing seasons of the year, the rain (and hail) that falls, the sun that shines, and you, the God who is the ground of our being from whose hand these mercies flow. They are truly mediators of your grace. And yet, Lord God, so many farmers and their workers live in great vulnerability and fear as the plague of farm attacks continues with seeming impunity. The brutal and senseless killing of an elderly couple and their daughter on their farm in Hartswater this week is yet another chilling example of this horrific reality. In the Bible, when Cain killed Abel out in the fields, the blood of this murdered brother cried out to you from the ground, and you heard the cry. So hear the cries of all our murdered brothers and sisters that rise to you from the blood-soaked earth, and the prayers we offer today

on behalf of them and all farm dwellers. Raise your arm of justice and open your hand of mercy, we pray, that all may know your gracious provision of security – of food and of life. Amen.”

At a recent virtual Limpopo Synod Executive meeting, it was proposed that we identify places which provides care in our areas, where the frontline workers are always at the risk of contracting Covid 19 as they seek to assist others, and find creative ways of affirming them and encouraging them. To that end, I have already written a letter of encouragement and motivation, as per the directive of our Stewards meeting, to the Faerie Glen and Pretoria East Hospitals. We would, however, like to invite all our members to join us on one Saturday in August, to physically go and welcome Nurses and Doctors as they come for their morning shifts in these Hospitals, holding up placards of encouragement and thanksgiving (Obviously following all safety protocols of face masks and physical distancing). We will let you know of the date that has been chosen through our different WhatsApp groups and Facebook Page.

I have attached four letters from the Limpopo Synod for your information and to help you with knowing what the Church is planning for the possible opening of places of worship in future. These are: **1. Limpopo Synod Pastoral Letter 7; 2. Limpopo Synod Guidelines for opening of onsite-worship; 3. Limpopo Synod procedures for opening and 4. Limpopo Synod guidelines for active listening.** Please read these carefully and familiarize yourselves with their contents.

In conclusion, we thank you once again for your continued support to the Church, and the care you show to each other during this difficult time. The words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 always rings true *“Rejoice always, Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ”.*

Shalom

Smanga and Wessel