

Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Diocese of Grahamstown

The Bishop of Grahamstown
The Rt Reverend Ebenezer St Mark Ntlali

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Special Ad Clerum

No. 04/2021

Dear people of God

COMMUNIQUE REGARDING ADJUSTED ALERT LEVEL 4 – COVID 19 REGULATIONS

We greet you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are well, wishing you the same.

We +Ebenezer are ruling in love as follows in order that you are part of the programme in saving lives:-

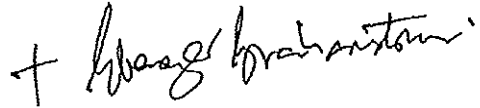
1. We, the family of the people of God and worshipping community of the Diocese of Grahamstown, have taken note of and acknowledge the announcements made by the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency the Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa last night, with respect to moving the country to Adjusted Alert Level 4 in accordance with the Disaster Management Act. We also want to add that the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Southern Africa the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba and the Synod of Bishops have also endorsed the fact that we need to consider to adjust our situation during this stage the pandemic.
2. This, on account of the spiralling new infections and the rapidly increasing number of people losing their lives from Covid -19 during the current surge of the Third Wave, where the Gauteng Province is at the epicentre thereof. Coupled with this is the fact that a new strain, called the Delta Strain - over and above the previous Beta strain - is preponderantly the dominant strain driving this current wave in the country. This is a new strain that is known to be highly transmissible from person to person, and thus calling for doubling up of efforts in ensuring the containment thereof as far as is humanly possible
3. To this end, we would like to reinforce our guidance and further implore all to adhere strictly to the preventive measures comprising the **Four W's**:
 - a). **W**ashing hands regularly with soap and water
 - b). **W**earing masks, covering both the nose and mouth whilst in public spaces
 - c). **W**atching the social distancing of 1,5 meters apart from the next person in public gatherings including worship services, always
 - d). Keeping **W**indows open for cross ventilation where people are assembled in large numbers such as in public gatherings and religious services
4. As will be appreciated, **all public gatherings are prohibited during the 14 – day - period from Monday 28th June to July 11th, the exception being only for funerals with a cap at 50 people attending.**

5. We, Bishop of the Diocese of Grahamstown therefore direct that contact divine services, parish council and EXCO meetings as well as all other Diocesan Meetings be suspended during this period in compliance with the regulations. These could be conducted virtually.
6. Such Meetings should only be conducted through virtual platforms until such time as the measures imposed have been lifted. This should not then be misconstrued to mean that clerics should be on holiday. Services and offices are to be conducted regularly and shared with your flocks via social media platforms as directed in our last Ad Clerum as these are particularly most needed during this time of being overwhelmed by helplessness and hopelessness!
7. Similarly, the administrative machinery at the parishes should not grind to a halt. The revenue collection streams should be kept alive. Parish Councils, Church Wardens, Pledge Secretaries, Treasurers, Bursars and Guild Executives have to discover creative ways of ensuring that the life of the church is sustained so as to meet recurring monthly commitments.
8. Specifically pertaining to home and or hospital visiting during this Covid -19 era, these are strictly prohibited, quite understandably so. Clerics are advised then rather to administer their pastoral ministrations using technology, such as voice contact or even a combination of both like video whatsapp call. This is intended to ensure protection of both the Cleric and the congregants equally.
9. In this regard we would like to remind all our clerics. and in particular the Archdeacons, to exercise vigilance and oversight with respect to observance of protocols and strict adherence thereto. The Churches under the umbrella of the South African Council of Churches with both the ACSA and our Diocese in concurrence issued COVID – 19 Guidelines pertaining to issues such as Holy Eucharist to be served in one kind and only the Celebrant partaking of the Blood, the handling and conduct of Baptism, as well as ashes on Ash Wednesday and Anointings. Notwithstanding this, there are regrettably witnessed incidence of gross violation of these guidelines. We implore you all to ensure the desisting from these dangerous practices
10. Please be reminded constantly that all forms of contact are prohibited at this level as well as that during the Covid-19 era, sanitizing is paramount where contact may occur, including that where anointing is unavoidable sanitizing using wet wipes in between candidates is mandatory!
11. The Chapter Meeting scheduled for the 08th July, which would have taken place at St Bernard Mizeki, Scenery Park in East London, will now take place through a virtual platform. The Office of the Dean of Grahamstown will be issuing proper guidance in this respect soonest.
12. All what we have guided you with, will be evaluated again after the 14 days and the address of the President. We will communicate what our position would be.

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We wish to advise that the office will operate everyday but on skeleton staff during this 14-day period.

Grace and peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bishop Grahamstown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BISHOP OF GRAHAMSTOWN

**Christ has no body on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours.
Ours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out;
ours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and ours are the hands with which**

He is to bless us now.

(St Teresa de Avila)