



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

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The MCSA's Response to the Corona Virus

In the wake of the first positive diagnosis of the Corona Virus in South Africa, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), a body that meets in large numbers most days of every week, has to implement measures that will help us to curb the spread of this highly contagious virus.

We have noted the panic that seems to have South Africa and other countries in its grip and we call for calm as we, together, implement strategies that can help our communities.

We encourage all our ministers and members to educate themselves about the virus, how it spreads, the symptoms and how we help stop the spread. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has advised that we each take the following simple measures seriously:

- **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water especially after using the bathroom and before preparing and eating food.**
- **Maintain social distancing- at least one metre between yourself and anyone who is sneezing and coughing.**
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth because our hands touch many surfaces and they can pick up the virus**
- **Practice respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and get rid of the tissue immediately. Sneezing and coughing into the crook of your arm is encouraged.**
- **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early**

As a church we propose the following:

- Those preparing Communion should first wash their hands thoroughly with soap and running water and paper towels NOT in a communal dish and towel. They can then wear disposable gloves and masks so that if they have the virus, they do not spread it.

A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations

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- Anyone feeling unwell should excuse themselves from serving.
- The ministers serving communion should also wash their hands with soap and running water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer before serving communion.
- For those circuits who can afford it, it may be wise to use disposable single use cups for communion for each service. For those who cannot, it will be necessary to then have soapy, hot water with a disinfectant and a team to wash the communion cups thoroughly before they are reused in the next service.
- We plead with those who may feel unwell or have cold or flu like symptoms to stay at home and seek medical treatment until they are feeling better before venturing into church services and other related church meetings
- We ask that each society ensure regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces that people touch regularly, including such things as door handles, light switches etc.
- May those who can afford to do so, make alcohol based hand-sanitisers available for congregants to sanitise their hands as they enter the church.
- Ministers should practice caution when paying home visits to ill patients and when necessary resort instead to phone calls.
- May we also do away with communal towels in our bathrooms and instead provide paper towels or hand dryers where possible.

We have no reason to believe, at this point, that services should be cancelled but we ask that we all play our part as proposed above, as well by keeping abreast with the latest findings. May we not be found among those who share fake news and spread unnecessary panic.

We continue to pray for a vaccine to end the deadly ravages of this virus and for healing for those who have already contracted it.

Lord in your mercy! Hear our prayers.



Rev Purity Malinga
Presiding Bishop