ELCZ WESTERN DIOCESE
CONVID-19 : COMMUNIQUE

21 March 2020

Lantenn Greetings to you All Brethrens: Deans, Pastors, fellow Christians and all Institutions

Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus (CONVID-19) which is rapidly spreading and threatening human life world-over. As a Church, we are compelled to join with others and act positively in response towards the reduction and elimination of its further spread.

Since from the advert of this deadly plague, the WHO and other Nations worldwide, including our own nation have always been issuing information and guide-lines to curb this outbreak.

Of recently, His Excellency, the State President of Zimbabwe on 17 March 2020 issued a statement declaring Coronavirus (CONVID-19) as a National disaster in Zimbabwe. For a period of 60 days from his announcement, gatherings which attracts a crowd of up to 100 people are to be avoided at all cost as a measure to prevent the rapid spread of the pandemic. As a Church, we hereby support the government’s call and all other preventive measures that are always called for by the Ministry of Health and Child welfare. Furthermore, the Church also joins hands to advise its members to follow all the guide-lines that are always provided.

Below are some of the guidelines that we should observe:

1. While we are to continue with Sunday services, let us avoid gatherings that attracts up to 100 people in one service session. Congregations with more than 100 members are advised to split services depending on the situation on ground. This should go on for a period of 60 days up until a new announcement is given by government.

2. Easter celebrations and other large gatherings which attracts large crowds to be suspended.

3. Parishes / Congregations are advised to use their own discretion in determining the preventive measures and the smooth running of church services in line with the stipulated measures.
4. In cases where members decide to worship in smaller groups, effective mechanisms of collecting offerings, tithing, etc should be put in place to make sure that funds collected are properly accounted for.

5. Pastors, DESC and Church elders to closely monitor developments and continue teaching and adhering to strict hygiene measures to mitigate against the spread of the virus.

6. Funeral services to be treated with care while observing expected preventive measures.

7. Use of sanitizers and washing of hands to be a must in all gatherings.

8. It is every one’s duty to continue sharing this information, be it to our homes, friends, work places, WhatsApp groups and even in our sermons in order to serve life.

9. In dealing with this situation, let us be calm and always trust in the Lord and know that we are surrounded by thousands of angels who watch over us in such a way that we can indeed trample upon the plague, as it is written in Psalm 91:11-13. “He has given His angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways ...” (M. Luther on August 2, 1527 during the outbreak of the deadly plague which almost swept the whole of Europe).

10. Finally brethren in Christ, I admonish and plead with you in Christ’s name to help with your prayers to God so that we may do battle with word and precept against the real and spiritual pestilence of Satan in his wickedness with which he now poisons and defiles the world. Amen

Yours in His Service

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Rt Rev M.M.S, Dube

ELCZ  Bishop - Western Diocese