

Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Regional Synod Cape – ISinodi-phondo – LaseKapa

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Scribe: Rev HH Tromp

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PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE CAPE REGIONAL SYNOD MODERAMEN OVER THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19

For Attention: Ministers, Church Councils, Congregations

We greet you in the powerful Name of our ever-triumphant Lord Jesus Christ.

On 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation over the outbreak of COVID-19. The President declared a National State of Disaster and introduced drastic measures to manage the disease and reduce the impact of the virus on our society.

The Cape Synod Moderamen held a teleconference on 16 March 2020 to prayerfully discern how to respond to this global pandemic. We would like to present the following guidelines:

1. We recognize the diverse nature and unique circumstances of all the congregations within the Cape Regional Synod and within the complexities of South African society.
2. We acknowledge that swift and decisive action is needed to contain and reduce the impact of this disease.
3. Therefore, the Moderamen appeals to all congregations to schedule all gatherings in such a way that it aligns with the measures outlined by the President.
4. We strongly encourage all congregations to rather have families gather separately in their own homes instead of convening together for Sunday morning services or prayer meetings.
5. This would mean that Holy Communion and Baptism would not be administered.
6. During this period, existing communication networks within the congregation must be employed to spread information, encouragement and spiritual care to congregants.
7. Where funerals are concerned, we call on families to practice minimalism by having small private ceremonies.
8. Ministers, Church Council members and Carers should, at all times, maintain the highest level of personal hygiene, especially the washing of hands, when doing urgent pastoral visits, locating themselves at least one metre from the person visited and having no physical contact whatsoever. Only urgent matters must be attended to. Other matters can be attended to by telephonic communication.
9. All planned celebrations and conferences by Ministries during this time should be cancelled or postponed.
10. We are aware of the financial implications arising due to these stringent measures and therefore encourages all our members to continue practising responsible stewardship by caring for both earth and neighbour.
11. We urge every member of society to show compassion in the midst of these trying times.
12. The Moderamen invites all ministers, congregations and communities to join us this Sunday, 22 March 2020 as we pray for our country and the world.

Let us remain faithful. Let us protect one another through our proclaimed love for God's creation.
Let us continue to seek ways in which to preach the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Let God's grace be evermore experienced as sufficient for us at all times.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

The Cape Regional Synod Moderamen

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