



Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Diocese of Grahamstown

The Bishop of Grahamstown
The Rt Reverend Ebenezer St Mark Ntlali

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Ad Clerum re Covid 19 Regulations

No. 06/2021

To: The Dean the Very Revd Mzinzisi Dyantyi
Members of Chapter
Rectors
Priests-in-Charge
Churchwardens
Leaders of Guilds

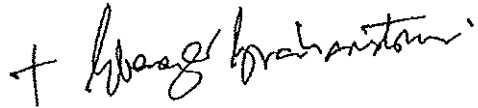
RE: DIOCESE OF GRAHAMSTOWN RESPONSE TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ARCHBISHOP THABO MAKGOBA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION ON THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW CORONAVIRUS VARIANT .

1. We, the family of the people of God and worshiping community of the Diocese of Grahamstown, have taken note of and acknowledge the announcements and the guidance from the above recently on the emergence of the new Coronavirus variant strain – **Omicron** - that has emerged in the country as well as the threat of a Fourth Wave of the Pandemic
2. We give glory to God in thanksgiving and praise that the life of the Church and particularly with respect to our worship practices as well as that our programmes can continue unhindered. This more so at this critical time in our Church Calendar. In the circumstances it behoves us as the Body of Christ to play our part of the bargain by giving support to the strategic trust and trajectory as mapped out by the Government to stave off the impact of the Pandemic through ensuring the prevention of further new infections as well as curtailing the emergence of further waves of the Pandemic.
3. To this end, we implore all the people of God in the Diocese to do everything possible within our might to, in every aspect of our lives secure our personal safety and in turn that of our neighbour. Resonating with the call by the President that large gatherings are as far as possible, to be avoided. Where absolutely unavoidable the stipulated legally permissible numbers must be adhered to as pertaining to funerals and other services. We are to exercise vigilance over our children especially the youth at this time where Matric Dance Raves are the order of the day. Such events and including End of the Year Parties should be deferred until the coast is clear.

4. Specifically with respect to worship services, our guidance is that we should all double up our vigilance with regards to the precautionary and preventative measures, leveraging from the basics what is euphemistically referred to as the **4W's**, namely:
 - a). **W**ashing hands regularly with soap and water or alternatively to **Sanitize**
 - 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. Where this cannot be achieved please do yourself a favour and avoid being in such gatherings
 - e). Get Vaccinated. This intervention still remains the most efficient to date for ensuring the protection of the majority of people from the ravages of the Pandemic.
 - f). Limit contacts with strangers as far as is possible by eschewing public gatherings with large numbers of people- particularly those exceeding two hours in duration and held in confined spaces.
 - g) . Enforce rigorously compliance as regards the statutorily stipulated limits with regards to numbers at public gatherings indoors and outdoors within the applicable Adjusted Alert Level of the Disaster Management Act h}. Regularly Keep pace with the most recent ACSA Covid Guidelines and comply therewith.
 - i) . Specifically be acutely aware that spread of the various is particularly efficient in liquid medium. The sharing of liquids from the same container is an **absolute No, No! So also is Tincture!** Hence the recommendation for receiving Holy Communion in one kind only. Where deviation has been sanctioned in this regard absolute extra **Infection Prevention and Control [IPC}** measures have to be employed. Failure to do so could invite criminal prosecutorial consequences for the culprits. For further clarification in this regard consult and obtain guidance from the **Rev Canon Dr Sam Beja, the Diocesan COVID -19 Coordinator and ACSA COVID Advisory Committee Liaison Officer** at **083 378 1113** and email address, **<sbeja@yahoo.com>**
5. Cognisant of the fact that the President has instituted a special task team looking into the controversial issue involving mandatory vaccination, we shall have to prayerfully reflect around this, as recommendations could well emerge from this task team to the effect that admission to church gatherings be thereby affected. In the meantime may we implore your prayers to join ours as we continue beseeching that Spirit Wisdom prevails upon decision makers for them to exercise righteousness and justice at all times so as not to prejudice anyone. We call upon each and every Anglican young and old to take the vaccine and be responsible in saving their lives and that of others. This will be a good sign of good stewardship.
6. We call upon you to keep the numbers as instructed 750 inside, 2000 outside and 100 for funerals depending the venue.

NB: We call upon the Rectors and Churchwardens to read this to the congregation and place it on the notice boards of your parishes. All with love and prayers.

Grace and peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bishop of Grahamstown', written in a cursive 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)