



17 March 2020

Dear Gracepoint Family

Gracepoint CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE - Updated March 17, 2020 11:30am

At Gracepoint Church, we take the health and well-being of our congregation, staff and community very seriously. Please continue to pray for those who are affected by this virus – those who are ill, the medical professionals treating them, the scientists working on vaccines and cures, those with mental health concerns, and the leaders making tough decisions to try and curb the spread of the virus and keep us safe, as well as those who are feeling lonely and isolated at this time.

We support the President's clarion call for 'urgent social distancing'. This is a practical strategy for containment that is indispensable and must be enforced. In respect to Gracepoint Ministries and Events, namely, *Children's Church, GAP, Youth Ministry, Lent Services, BOB meetings, Home Group Meetings, Recovery Fellowships, Youth Confirmation, Pastoral Caring* through *home visits, hospital visits, weddings and funerals*, we anticipate that these will unfold as we take this journey together.

We are all in this TOGETHER! As part of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), we are privileged to work collectively across six countries (Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa) in monitoring coronavirus (COVID-19) updates. Gracepoint has established a medical response team to help guide us as we together journey through this time, reflecting spiritually, emotionally and physically on how we care for our community and together find healing and wholeness.

In light of the President's address and ensuring that we are in line with the instructions from the MCSA Presiding Bishop, Purity Malinga, and interacting responsibly with wisdom, we believe by faith "for such a time as this" we are called to be salt and light and to navigate the opportunities for ministry and care at this time.

We continue to call for prayerful calm in the belief that God remains in control.

In addressing the Gracepoint action plan, the Leadership Team met and released this communication as Response 1, as at 11h30 Tuesday 17 March 2020 to COVID 19. Please note it is subject to change and updates.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

If you or a family member is sick, or may have been directly exposed to the virus or have travelled to a high-alert area, please follow the medical guidelines and refrain from attending church services, programs and events during the 14- day incubation period and instead worship with us online. YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS. Avoid large gatherings of people and close contact with people who are sick. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PBO Reg. No. 18/11/13/690

GRACEPOINTMETHODISTCHURCH

Tel: 011 702 4600 Emergency no.: 076 498 2088 E-mail: info@gracepoint.co.za

P.O. Box 1408, Lonehill 2062. 125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, 2191

Rev. Jacqui Rivas, Rev. Similo Sanqela

www.gracepoint.co.za





WORSHIP

Only online worship services will be available on the weekend of 22 March 2020. Please subscribe on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkjawcdgKp00bEh7Orm7h2g>), as well as “like” us on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Gracepointjozi/>), for you to stay connected and be able to watch our services “LIVE”. Please also connect with us through our website (www.gracepoint.co.za).

Please use our website for giving (www.gracepoint.co.za/give), and for prayer requests during the online worship service (prayer@gracepoint.co.za). You may also mail donations to the church at Gracepoint. You may view, download and/or print the Weekly Mailer/Gracepoint bulletin. We encourage you to register for our WhatsApp Connect in order to receive communication and updates from us. Our WhatsApp Connect number is **071 892 9382**.

All our digital platforms will be used to share information and updates on *Children, Youth, Communion, Easter 2020 preparations, Palm Sunday, Holy week, Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday*. These will be different, but we believe these will be incredible moments of grace. We are also creating opportunities for *Meditation Walks* and *Stations of the Cross* as places for alternative forms of worship during Easter season, albeit differently during this time.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Please contact the Counselling ministry either on our Gracepoint Landline (011) 702-4600, or at counselling@gracepoint.co.za. Our Emergency Contact is 076 498 2088. You can also send us a WhatsApp message on 071 892 9382.

Weddings and funerals will continue, as scheduled. For these, you can e-mail weddings@gracepoint.co.za or funerals@gracepoint.co.za, as the case may be.

Pastoral and Care Ministry teams will make home and hospital visits, unless they have been exposed to the virus or are in a risk category. They will diligently wash hands before and after every visit, and temporarily refrain from touching patients' hands.

Our congregational care and counselling team will continue to care for our congregation, while taking precautions to protect everyone's health and prevent the spread of the virus. Hospitals and care facilities are beginning to limit visitors. When possible, in healthcare facilities that are closed to visitors, we will remain connected with patients and our community by phone calls and notes. To make contact with the Care Team, you can e-mail care@gracepoint.co.za.

SMALL GROUPS, CLASSES AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Youth Confirmation will continue later in the year, we will be establishing ONLINE platforms to teach and connect with each other.

GAP ministry will send out family activities as we have fun at home.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PBO Reg. No. 18/11/13/690

GRACEPOINTMETHODISTCHURCH

Tel: 011 702 4600 Emergency no.: 076 498 2088 E-mail: info@gracepoint.co.za

P.O. Box 1408, Lonehill 2062. 125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, 2191

Rev. Jacqui Rivas, Rev. Similo Sanqela

www.gracepoint.co.za





Discipleship, small groups and classes, Band of Brothers groups will meet in homes or online, though this will be re-evaluated weekly as we regularly engage leaders and the team to assess our risk exposure.

Support groups, Recovery Ministry and Counselling Training and Alpha and Alpha Marriage meetings with less than 100 people in attendance will continue as scheduled. We will be engaging further with the leaders of these ministries to determine the risk and needs of the ministries as we navigate the way forward.

To ensure we are all safe, there will be rules of engagement as we meet. This will be posted on all our social media platforms for clarity and we implore wisdom as we uphold and enforce them in the interests of everyone's safety.

The early church met in small and life-giving ways and we will look at creative alternatives in finding a connection with each other during this season. We encourage our community to use this time for spiritual reflection and growth and we will be providing daily updates and links for this formation.

The Wednesday night **LENT TEACHINGS WILL NOW BE DONE LIVE, THROUGH OUR ONLINE PLATFORMS.**

All other gatherings of 100+ people will be cancelled or moved to our online platforms from 18 March 2020, and will be re-evaluated weekly thereafter.

EASTER 2020 will be an incredible opportunity for the Gospel to be shared and lived out in wonderful ways, and together we will discover what God is calling us to at this time.

COMPASSION AND JUSTICE

Food distribution will continue, and together we can understand the extent of risk and vulnerability, particularly as our Nation has been declared a risk to community infections and this will potentially have a significant impact on the already vulnerable.

We will continue to develop a scaled response in alignment with the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to our Compassion ministry.

Assistance with those in immediate need, for example food, shopping assistance, medical support, etc., will continue through Gracepoint Compassion and Justice Relief. In addition, we will offer a coronavirus help line. All enquiries to be made to either coronahelpline@gracepoint.co.za or ministers@gracepoint.co.za or info@gracepoint.co.za.

Gracepoint will be a collection site for the basic essentials for the most vulnerable. Communication regarding the packs will be sent out on Wednesday the 18 March 2020 and the distribution sites will be identified within the broader Methodist Family so that a collective collaborative response is well thought through as we reach the most vulnerable in our community. We are anticipating the spread of the virus in the next two weeks and we want to be prepared for this as a Church in our immediate response.

We caution the frenzy and panic with regards stock piling and call to witness our Christian imperative that reminds us in all seasons that our own needs should not jeopardize access to the essentials for life of others. In times like this it's our sharing that matters most and speaks to our convictions and witness.

Our Kairos and Prison Ministry brings life and support and these initiatives are planned for 16 April 2020 and 23 April

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PBO Reg. No. 18/11/13/690

GRACEPOINTMETHODISTCHURCH

Tel: 011 702 4600 Emergency no.: 076 498 2088 E-mail: info@gracepoint.co.za

P.O. Box 1408, Lonehill 2062. 125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, 2191

Rev. Jacqui Rivas, Rev. Similo Sanqela

www.gracepoint.co.za





2020. We will engage with the leaders of these ministries so as to present a comprehensive plan to our ongoing work, and communication will be sent out by the 1st April 2020.

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Help us ensure the health of our community. For an appointment with church staff, please contact them by phone or email.

Our staff and volunteers are committed to maintaining a healthy environment by reducing interpersonal contact and washing hands frequently. Staff members and volunteers who are sick, or have been around someone with active symptoms, will stay home for the recommended quarantine period.

As the situation evolves, our staff will continue to connect with volunteers and congregants through email and phone calls to keep you updated on cancellations and program changes.

FACILITIES AND BUILDINGS

Volunteers, leaders and participants should take precautions appropriate for their own personal health situation.

Church offices will remain open between 8am to 5pm (Monday – Thursday) and 8am to 3pm (Fridays).

Outside office hours, church buildings will be open for limited hours, opening for essential support, weddings, funerals and a limited scope of programs.

In addition to regular cleaning by our cleaning team, highly touched surfaces will be sanitized frequently. Additional sanitizers and soap are available through the facility.

This particular crisis finds us during our Lenten season, a time of intentional soul searching. A chosen wilderness, Easter 2020 will be different and as Christ followers we are called to discover that in all things God will work for a discovery of His glory. As the scriptures remind us, 'for such a time as this' and we chose our responses to become the healing life changing presence of the Gospel.

It is our prayer that as a community, the fervor of the Gospel will grow, and that together we will navigate this time with love, compassion and wisdom.

Let's STAY CONNECTED.

Hand washing. Social Distancing. Community Connecting. Better together!

With Love
Jacqui and Similo

Government Emergency COVID 19 Hotline is 080 002 9999.

SA GOVT. COVID-19 WhatsApp number is 060 012 3456

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PBO Reg. No. 18/11/13/690

GRACEPOINTMETHODISTCHURCH

Tel: 011 702 4600 Emergency no.: 076 498 2088 E-mail: info@gracepoint.co.za

P.O. Box 1408, Lonehill 2062. 125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, 2191

Rev. Jacqui Rivas, Rev. Similo Sanqela

www.gracepoint.co.za

