

*St Paul's Anglican Church, Durban*



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# ST PAUL'S CHURCH COVID -19 RESPONSE PLAN/PROCEDURE

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**Phasing in of St Paul's Community/Parishioners in Church, with response to government's address of changing people's behaviour in dealing with Covid-19 pandemic's aftermath.**



JUNE 29, 2020  
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Version 1  
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## 1. PURPOSE

To formulate a draft working policy document required by both the Diocese of Natal and the Republic of South Africa, in our parish`s readiness in dealing with COVID - 19 pandemic`s current lockdown procedures and its aftermath.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In response to the call, St Paul`s leadership has formed a task team to deal with our parish`s readiness, response and preparedness, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It`s a given fact that parishes will never go back to function as they used to previously, and the people that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its lockdown procedures. This also calls us to change the approach of our own parish, in terms of serving and preparing our people for the current, and future, pandemic(s).

## 3. BACKGROUND

St Paul`s Church service offering has been a traditional way of people attending the services physically, however, after the introduction of lockdown procedures by the government we have seen a shift from this approach by the clergy. This has been appreciated, as well as demonstrated by the power of God, in terms of the introduction of technology, that has improved our lives. Our clergy has been using this advantage in order to service our Parishioners.

## 4. IMPLICATIONS

The lockdown and the aftermath of COVID-19 have the following implications on both the Diocese and the Parish at large:

- **Legal** - COGTA regulations, which include screening, isolation and physical removal of affected persons from the parish premises, may cause high emotions as people might feel offended. A more detailed approach to this regard will be given under the task team portfolio dealing with Health and Safety & Risk Management. **See attached COGTA regulations as Annexure 1.**
- **Time** - Compliance on all the regulations will require more time and resources, in terms of keeping up with both administration and wellness of parishioners. The task team will start doing planning and programming, once the guideline document has been finalised and given the go-ahead by council.

The time frames will be programmed with specific dates with milestones attached to the activity so that minimum, or no time, will be lost in this regard.

- **Financial** - Additional funding is required to mitigate all risks mentioned above, also for the smooth phasing in of parishioners back to the church, and planning for future pandemics. The financial assistance will be required for the implementation and procuring all the relevant materials like sanitisers; fumigation of the church and screening apparatus. The team will look at getting quotations once the guideline has been provisionally approved by the parish council.

Detailed analysis of service costs using technology will be looked at as an alternative for the future, and current, with all cost comparisons and its implications on the financial status of the parish. The more detailed financial pack will be attached as an additional tool on this document. See attached pricing checking price list as **Annexure No.2**

- **Social** - The public image of the church may be negatively affected as some people will not want to associate themselves with screening, and to observe the social distance requirements outlined by the government. The guidelines talk about screening regulations with contact details, and this information will be used as a means of supporting and providing counselling to affected parishioners. The information will not only be used as screening for Covid-19 but also as a tool to update the parish roll and our parish database, for future clergy visits, parish budgeting and service offerings to better serve the people. This will further educate the parish on its people's needs and ways to better assist them instead of using one blanket approach. **See attached contact tracing register as Annexure No.3**

## 5. PROPOSAL

Based on the parish background and implications above, it is proposed that:

The task team look at mechanisms required for our parish, in order to comply with required regulations. Our vision is governed by the following pillars taken from the government regulations. They are as follows:

- Curbing the spread of the virus, or flattening the curve.
- Changes to service times and increase the number of services per day, including the use of technology to service our parishioners.
- Establishment of Health, Safety and wellness teams using the pool of experts from within our parish, to assist with both administration and much-needed advice.

- Shaping of our behaviours in terms of social distancing and planning for future pandemic(s).

### 5.1 Curbing the spread of the virus or flatten the curve – Administration Portfolio.

In response to preaching the message and checking both the current status of our parish regulations, the task team has formed the administration portfolio and its mandate is to deal with the following burning issues:

- Checking of all current parish regulations with regards to the Diocese and the requirements by both COGTA and SACC guidelines on what is standard procedure; checking the Parish roll and communicating current and future church plans through communication channels available, to parishioners.
- Strategies on the best communication channels to be used by both the rector and the church wardens in order to keep in touch with parishes.
- Future parish plans with regards to increase number of church services on Sunday as means of phasing in parishioners with minimum numbers required.
- Implementation and formulation of the correct procedures to be followed by both the parish and the parishioners, with regards to change in behaviour of people, due to lockdown and the pandemic.
- Look at the vision and the mission of the church with regard to servicing its parishioners.

### 5.2 Changes to service times and increase the number of services per day including using the technology to service our parishioners – Structure Portfolio

In addition to the required regulations of fumigation and disinfection of our church and common areas, the current regulations call for the reduction in the number of people permitted per gathering and this calls for the parish to assess the availability of opportunities provided by both technology and traditional ways of conducting a service. This portfolio will be presented as if it favours technology as opposed to the traditional methods, whereas it's not the case, but currently the rationale will prove that technology is the available option, for the time being, because of the following reasons:

- The traditional methods will require more personnel in terms of services because all the requirements by law will have to be met, meaning, we must have a minimum of 10 people per service as follows
  - Two screening points that will be at the entrance from the flea market and on the workshop side entrance.
  - Four people doing actual screening and registration in order to work on speed that will not affect the service times.

- Six side persons to work as ushers for sitting arrangements and monitor compliance.

The above points illustrate that currently, we need human resources and finances to be made available immediately, to deal with regulations hence the proposal. The current state of the church needs to talk to its vision and mission for the community, during this pandemic. The correct strategy now is the use of available technology to conduct services. The traditional methods of meeting people at one place is not available currently, so there are service options like Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp and local community radio stations.

The idea is not to lose the parishioners that are above the age of 60, who are the ones mostly affected by the regulations. The parish needs to look at possible avenues, like having turned, as a form of collaboration with the Archdeaconry, in order to minimise costs to conduct and host services on the platforms. The strategy of having a service roster for the Durban Archdeaconry and the Archdeacon being the one co-ordinating service, with one slot given to each parish as per the list, will help us to remain relevant and the voice of hope to our communities, whilst we still keep on improving our local service offerings through youtube and other platforms.

We can even look at available space on Sentech, to look at establishing the Diocese of Natal – Durban Archdeaconry local radio station or a slot on some of the local radio stations to provide service to God's people so that we can help create God's Kingdom here in our region. It might seem like we are digressing, but remember, we talk of the future as well, with pull expertise and people of God with contacts on all spheres of the business, including government. The point we are trying to drive home, is that with technology, there are endless opportunities that can be explored, if we allow ourselves to think outside the box, especially this year 2020.

### 5.3 Establishment of Health, Safety and wellness teams using the pool of experts from our parish to assist with both administration and much-needed advice – Risk Management Portfolio/Security Portfolio

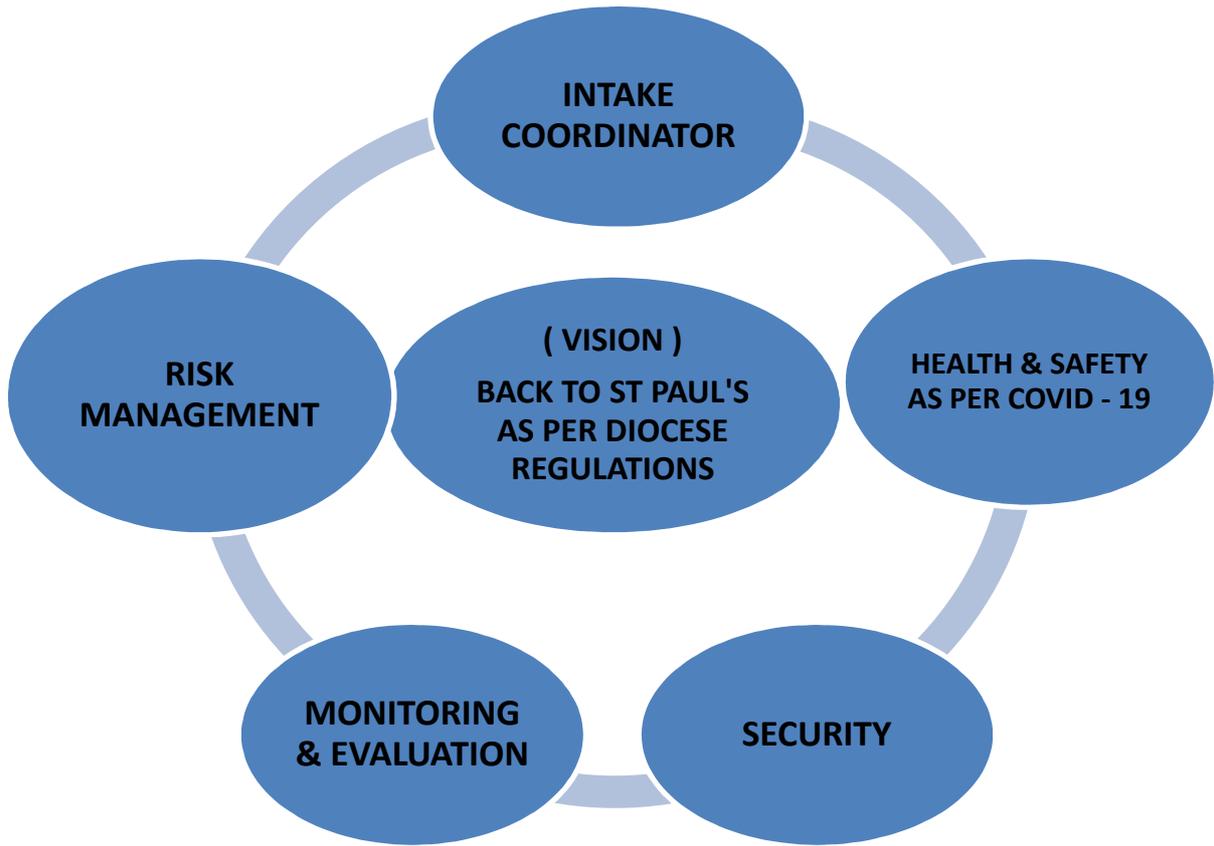
In compliance with the regulations, we need to develop a programme that is not only looking at screening, identifying, preventing the spread of COVID -19 on our parish, but we must look at providing health wellness programmes that will be beneficial to our community of St Paul. The pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to look at the current service offerings of the parish including Diocese. Are we able to look at the actual struggles of our people and try and assess the situations? The pandemic has affected our people negatively in different ways

The following are the most basic needs that need to be looked at holistically both at this pandemic phase whilst we deal with phasing in and future assistance. The pool of academics like Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, Lawyers, Social Workers, Peace Officers and financial advisers, will be called upon. With regards to the current situation, advice will be sourced, so that our documentation with regards to rules, regulations and disclaimers are in line with government legislation. Since the pandemic is affecting people and our community deals with people, or our main business is people, we need to be mind full of the following key well-being areas for both now and the future of our parish:

- Physical needs if one of our parishioners is tested positive, what are the immediate steps to be taken by the parish well team, to help the person deal with the pain, and the support to be given, as a caring community, and to show compassion, as a loving community.
- Emotional is the one provided by the clergy, but it is not limited to preaching and prayers, but doctors, nurses and social workers need to provide that extended support to help ease the physical pain, while the clergy is dealing with both Spiritual and physical; counselling also needs to be provided by our core team of professionals to parishioners.
- Security of parishioners: need to have a good legal support for the community to be in harmony with one another. The guidelines must have both the input of the legal experts, like lawyers, and peace officers, like the police.
- Our parishes will be negatively affected by the pandemic in terms of financial wellness; thus, assistance will be required, with regard to financial counselling, and financial support in terms of food vouchers.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Covid-19 has affected our lives negatively, especially the social aspect of our lives, however, it has also provided us with an opportunity to look at our current policies, and planning for future pandemics. Our pool of experts in all the related areas of the church is much needed in planning for the future and assist with current lockdown procedures.



## **INTAKE COORDINATORS**

- Accumulating stats of parishioners, by sending a bulk message, WhatsApp and circulating amongst the groups, asking how parishioners feel about coming back to church.
- We need to know how many parishioners will attend and which service they would prefer to attend.
- We will then create a database.
- We will need our secretary to return to work.
- We suggest a 7:30 and 9:30 service to begin with and an hour service of each
- Will see that precaution and prevention is carried out
- Intake coordinators will be at the door to receive, welcome and monitor parishioners.
- Intake coordinators will also be recording, sanitising and taking the temperature at the door.
- They will also be able to give adequate information and record questions or complaints to improve on systems put in place.
- Intake coordinators will also have an accurate number of attendances.
- We will have a suggestion box, and this will ensure parishioners that we value their suggestions.
- All parishioners should wear masks before entering the church.
- Zoom and Youtube will still continue for those who will not attend.
- For Collaboration, those with expertise that would like to volunteer will give written communication to the rector.
- We need a monitoring and evaluation form
- We need a Contact tracing register
- We need to look at Zoom church services, which assist us in allocating numbers and slowly phase in coming back to church.

## **INTAKE COORDINATION SELECTION AND TRAINING**

- We need to firstly screen volunteers who will be assisting.
- Train and supervise volunteers in their responsibilities.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **SANITISING PREMISES**

- Entire church premises, offices, reception, parking, Hall x2 and residential area to be disinfected and sanitised.

## **ACCIDENT PREVENTION / LONG AND SHORT TERM**

- We need to check if sidewalks are well lit, dry and covered with non-slip material.
- Walkways and doors to be kept free from obstruction.
- Parking lots to be safe and secured by security, indicating the direction to entrance and exit.

## **FLOOR PLAN / EVACUATION FLOOR PLAN**

- Parishioners should know the evacuation procedure and the assembly point.
- This will also assist in any emergencies the church may experience.

## **FIRE PROTECTION / LONG AND SHORT TERM**

- Do we have a fire alarm system and are fire extinguishers readily available?
- We need to make sure that our fire extinguishers, fire hose, fire sprinklers are maintained at all times. We need to keep a record of when these items were/are maintained, and the next date thereafter.
- We also need to follow up on where the fire extinguishers are positioned and if there is clear signage.

## **SECURITY**

- Our church should have an electronic security system in place.
- We should have a strict key and remote monitoring system, to minimise ease of access for just anyone. Asset control is also important.
- We should have adequate lighting around doors, parking lots, and at the rear of our building.
- Security should have a uniform that indicates that he is an employee of St Pauls; this will assist in identifying St Paul's security, should there be any visitors on the premises.
- Movement of people in and out the premises must be correctly recorded for tracing in case of any incidents. Security should also have sanitiser at all times.
- We need security with good knowledge and security background that will make sure people will comply with the Church and Lockdown regulations.

## **FIRST AID KIT**

- Currently, our first aid kits are old and need to be updated.
- We require x2, 1 in the Rectors office and one in the church.

## **TEMPERATURE THERMOMETERS**

- We would need x2 non-contact, infrared thermometers, as we will have x2 entrance points.

## **ENTRANCE TO CHURCH**

- We will use one entrance from the flea market and the one exit from the Workshop side.
- We will corner off the Church House entrance side.

## **SIGNAGE**

- We will have signage in every section in order to communicate and convey information to parishioners.
- Signage is important as it is an essential component that draws attention and assists in educating and communication.

## **STAFF**

- All staff to be screened before resuming duties.
- Staff also to be trained on policies, regulations and procedures regarding COVID 19.
- Staff to be trained on how to deal with COVID-19 cases.

## **COUNSELLING**

- We should have someone who is qualified and readily available to counsel anyone found to have contracted COVID-19, this is important as people have committed suicide, not knowing how to handle this pandemic.
- Also, offer to counsel for depression which is ignored most of the time.
- Pastoral care would also fall under this, and we could have Clergy counsel any Elderly if any of why they should stay safe at home.

## **ISOLATION ROOM (SMALL HALL)**

- We should utilise the small hall as a quarantine room.
- This room should have gloves, sanitiser, wet wipes, tissue /toilet roll, masks, stretcher for an individual to lie down.

## **WATER CONTAINER WITH POLYETHYLENE CUPS**

- Water container outside which will be controller by an individual for parishioners to drink after church.

## **REST ROOMS**

- In both male and female toilets, there should be hand sanitisers, paper towel, toilet roll and a bin.
- There will be signage inside the toilets as well.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

**OFFICIAL TOLL FREE CALL CENTER / EMERGENCY HOTLINE: 0800 029 999**  
**WHATSAPP SUPPORT LINE: 0600 123 456**

**NB: WE SHOULD TRY TO AVOID ANY GATHERINGS AFTER CHURCH**

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## **CHECKLIST FOR ESSENTIAL ITEMS**

- First aid kit(s)
- Infrared, non-contact thermometers (FDA, or SABS approved)
- Hand sanitisers (minimum 70% alcohol, fast-drying liquid, not gel)
- Self-sanitising stands (elbow or foot pump stands)
- Gloves
- Masks
- Fumigation/ disinfection of church and common areas
- Paper towel rolls for toilets
- Toilet roll
- Liquid soap for toilets
- Hand sanitiser dispensers for toilets
- Signage