

Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa

(Church of England in South Africa)

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REACH-SA Public Statement

REACH-SA welcomes the President's recent affirmation of the role of the faith community in South Africa. We also welcome the recognition of ministers as essential service workers.

REACH-SA wholeheartedly supports the call to a National Day of Prayer on Sunday 31 May.

We also note the easing of restrictions with regards to worship gatherings and recognize that this concession puts significant responsibility into the hands of church leaders.

The Bishops and senior leaders of the denomination have taken a number of concerns into account:

- The current rise in infections, which will potentially increase over this winter period.
- The limitations on numbers (50 or less) as well as risk group restrictions means that many members will still not be able to attend worship services.
- Home based meetings also remain off-limits due to prohibition of social gatherings. (We await further clarity on weddings and special services.)
- The disinfection and social distancing protocols will have cost and management challenges as well as putting significant limits on fellowship and worship.

The Bishops and senior leadership of REACH-SA are convinced that the current risk factors still outweigh the benefits of limited public gatherings. We therefore do not support a return to public gatherings at this stage. We appeal to all our churches to forego this small freedom in the short term out of loving concern for the lives of others.

We are conscious that all our churches, particularly those in poorer and rural communities, have been significantly affected during this lockdown period. The Presiding Bishop's Recovery Fund aims to help support these struggling churches over this crisis time and we are grateful for several generous donations.

We call on all our members to join the National Day of Prayer on 31 May 2020 (Pentecost) and we look forward to the day when God's people can gather without restriction and declare God's praises together.

"May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance" 2 Thess. 3:5