

The Christian Voice

Sunday, 14 June, 2020

Covid-19 WATCH ▶ **356** cases | **54** recoveries | **4** deaths

ON A WEEKEND

Churches start services under strict guidelines



EFZ president Bishop Never Muparutsa

Some churches are likely to start their services this Sunday as the government has eased the lockdown regulations.

However, the regulations only allow 50 people to attend the service at a time.

For the churches who will start services this Sunday strict regulations as per World Health Organisation need to be followed.

The Heads of Christian Denominations have released Covid-19 guidelines for church services that open this Sunday.

These include temperature checks, sanitisation, social distancing and elimination of practises that may cause infection.

The practise also includes recording of the contacts of all the congregates who attend for contact tracing. In the event that there is a positive case all those who have attended that particular service will be traced for testing and quarantine purposes.



17 May 2020

Looking at Opening Churches Again

We have all endured Lockdown measures since 30 March 2020. Churches have also been coping differently to these measures with much discomfort to being completely closed. Wisdom and prudence instructs us to plan ahead and be prepared for opening once the Government makes announcement.

Below are useful frameworks to use while assessing whether your church is ready or not to open for the public worship. This list is not exhaustive and we encourage you to follow guidelines from Government and the World Health Organization.

Things to Bear in mind as Church and Pastor:

CLEANLINESS OF YOUR PREMISES

- Use proper chemicals to clean and disinfect venues at least twice the day of worship before and after gathering 
- Provide hand sanitizers at entrances and within gathering venue for easy access. Teach members to make home made sanitizers
- Clean surfaces used mostly using detergents such as chairs, tables, door handles and toilet facilities
- Sufficient time be allocated to disinfect again before new group of worshippers come in

PHYSICAL DISTANCING PROTOCOLS

- Stick to the maximum numbers per gathering permitted by law 
- If your numbers exceed the limit, consider multiple services with sufficient in-between break to allow them to exit without breaking physical distancing protocols
- Seating arrangements have to be at least a metre apart

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Building hope

Bishop Trust Sinjoki



King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived said, "The person who has no rule over his spirit is like a city that is broken down, without walls" (Proverbs 25:19). Now, that is the worst state of Hopelessness. Anything and everything comes in and goes out your life, at will. That is where Satan has driven a lot of believers to, of late, with the coming of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, leading to the meltdown of economies, personal needs and tensions in relationships. Many have lost the last thing one should ever lose.. Hope!

I have been doing a Hope Building series, whose one aim is simply, to build again the broken walls of Hope in the lives of believers.

Perhaps in life, you may have lost very valuable items, assets, or even precious relationships but whatever happens, don't lose your hope. I am sure you may have witnessed ladies, cling to their hand bag as thieves try to snatch them away. You probably have seen people in marriage refuse to let go of their marriages, even if what's left of it is just the paper on which they signed. That is how you need to fight, to keep your hope. You see, hope is the expectation that faith builds on. Faith is the currency that then brings the blessings, favour and grace of God for your life. Without Hope, you are a city, broken, without walls. As you build again your hope, be ready to fight like Nehemiah.

There are 3 enemies that stood against Nehemiah as soon as he embarked on rebuilding the walls of the city of Jerusalem and I see these play out in the lives of those who rise up, to build the walls of Hope in their lives. I pray that the body of Christ identify these 3 enemies, today and build their Hope in these challenging times.

First enemy of Nehemiah, was a man called Sanballat, whose name means Brumble (thorn tree). Sanballat, openly opposed, taunted and tried to humiliate Nehemiah. Much like Goliath, who openly challenged the armies of Israel. He was like the thorn that tried to disable Apostle Paul. This is what is fighting to pull down your

walls of hope today. Nonetheless Nehemiah still built the wall, in a record 52 days. David said, who is this uncircumcised Philistine? Goliath Fell and Paul discovered God's grace was sufficient. So build your hope anyway!

Then there was Tobiah, who represents your religious enemies. His name professes, the goodness of God, yet, he tirelessly fought Nehemiah, for building the walls. In fact, Tobiah seems to have been Nehemiah's number one enemy as he prayed more against Tobiah than the other two. Just like our Lord Jesus was fought more by the Pharisees of the day, than the tax collectors and prostitutes, it is the religious church goes, who fight your hope, your faith and the favour of God in your life, more. Despite the acrimony of Tobiah, build your hope in Christ, anyway.

The third enemy was a man called Geshem, whose name means torrents of rain. This speaks of storms, that come your way as you rise to build your walls of hope. It never never rains

Trust me, many believers have shipwrecked, during these protracted lockdowns. Many have lost hope. God is looking for hope Builders!

but pours. Have you noticed how, as you rise to build, one evil report after another reaches your ears, (In Job's style), clamouring for your attention, distracting you from building your hope. (Read Nehemiah) Tribal issues rise, family issues, widows complaints, life threats, mockery, you name it. You may receive news of sickness, deaths, bills, accusations etc. Don't stop building your hope. Even if it means, like Nehemiah you are carrying a trowel on one hand and a sword on the other, build your hope! Do not lose your hope.

You see once a man loses hope, anything goes in his life. Hopeless people live and die anyhow. Hopeless people have no dreams or purpose. Hopeless people believe anything and are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Whatever it takes hold on to that hope in Christ.

I know that some argue that not coming together of churches does not stop your faith in God. True that, but church is the Hope Building Assembly. Trust me, many believers have shipwrecked, during these protracted lockdowns. Many have lost hope. God is looking for hope Builders!



Luveve residents stage demo against City Council

Residents of Old Luveve, Bulawayo took to the streets in protest over the unclean and unsafe tap water that is being supplied by the Bulawayo City Council (BCC).

Residents in Old Luveve said most of the people in their suburb are seriously ill due to the contaminated water coming from the taps with some having been admitted at Mpilo Hospital. Officials from the council today visited the residential area to collect water samples for further testing.

“We have been reporting our water situation for the past month and the council is only responding now. People are at risk of dying due to drinking this water and such matters need people to act fast before too much damage is done,” said a resident of Old Luveve.

A household in the suburb has 4 children who have been affected by the contaminated water and is suffering from stomach ache.

“We have to pay exorbitant fees at the local clinic and Mpilo but this is a crisis affecting the

entire community. We are made to pay a lot of money which we do not have,” read a tweet by @RealBeefactor.

Another resident who was identified as Anna Mary Mudzinganyama said people were dying due to the contaminated water and the government has to assist them since the City Council is failing to address their needs.

“As I am speaking to you right now, my stomach is very painful. The moment you drink water from the tap you develop a running tummy. On top of a running tummy there is no water to flush the toilets. This is a huge disaster,” she said.

Mr Moyo who has five children said all of them are now sick. He said they lodged a report to the local authorities and they came to collect samples but they never got the report or feedback from them on the samples that they had collected.

“When I woke up to fetch water from the tap, I noticed that the water had tissue particles.

When you go to the clinic or hospital they want us to pay for their services but we do not have the money.

In an interview with *The Chronicle*, the Council director of Health services, Dr Edwin Sibanda said members of the public have to be extra careful when drinking water. He urged residents to develop a culture of boiling drinking water and should not consider storing water collected within the first five minutes after water is restored.

“We are in a water crisis and residents may be victims of the water that comes out in the first five minutes following cuts. When water is cut, some remains in the pipes until water is restored. That water which remains in the pipe is subject to some reactions which means when water is restored, residents should let it run for about five minutes before drinking directly from the tap,” he said.

It is alleged that three people have died due to stomach aches from Old Luveve.

Presidents' prayer call divides Church

The President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa call for a national day of prayer and fasting has divided the church on whether to participate or not.

Some of the church leaders have called on the President to 'repent first' before calling for national day of prayer and fasting.

Dr Shingi Munyeza wrote on his platform, The Watchman, that prayer without repentance is an abomination. He quoted Bible scripture on the book of Isaiah which speaks on the need of setting priorities straight.

Dr Munyeza's views were echoed by Bishop Ancelimo Magaya of Zimbabwe Divine Destiny (ZDD) who said that the presidential prayer session on Monday was 'meaningless unless he can first repent from state sponsored violence that has occurred against citizens'.

Bishop Magaya also said the call for prayer was an abomination that God will not accept. He said the church must go back to the drawing board and be transparent to each other.

"We as the Church are divided; we are praying that things be according to our minds, protecting our interests, positions and influences in high places. Saints this will never take us anywhere as a national church," he said.

Other church leaders pointed out that already a 90 day prayer platform being coordinated by the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) was ongoing and had the majority of churches and Christians participating.

"If the President wants prayer to be held he should approach the church leaders and bodies and leave them to coordinate and call for the prayer. This appears like a Command Prayer Event," said one of the church leaders.

Apostle Levy Moyo also said it was the duty of the church to organize such prayers of the country. He said the President should have engaged church leaders about the prayer and in turn, the church leaders in the country report back to their constituencies which is the church.

"It would have been wise for the President to approach Bishops to request a prayer.

Then the

Bishops will then inform churches countrywide that the President is requesting for a day of prayer and fasting. We are just engraved into a programme that is not ours or God's. I am saying let us not always fall into a snare," he said.

However, some of the church leaders commended the President for the call of prayer and said that it was important as he stands in the office of political leader of the nation.

"We have been praying that our President should humble himself and repent. To me the call of prayer, I see it as genuine. I take him at his word and take advantage of that. I wish we could be one of those close to him to disciple and mentor him," said

A spokesperson for the indigenous churches network said this was a historic event which all churches should participate in.

The prayer event will be held at the State House and broadcast live on ZTV and other social media platforms



Dr Shingi Munyeza

Churches hold 90 days of Prayer

Every morning and evening church leaders throughout the country have been sharing a platform to pray for the nation.

The 90 day prayer event started on 1 June 2020 and will end on 30 August 2020.

So far church leaders who have led prayers include Pastor Tom Deuschle, Bishop Colin Nyathi, Dr Shingi Munyeza, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) President Never Mparutsa, former Anti-corruption commissioner Petunia Chiriseri, Word of Life International, Mrs Maureen Shana and Pastor Chichi Bismark.

The prayer event which is being broadcasted on Facebook and on Zoom draws thousands of Christians to pray through laid out prayer items.

Some of the prayer points that have been encompassed into this programme include praying against corruption, political violence, poverty, economic revival and many other issues that are affecting the nation.

"This is one occasion that is historic where the church has united across racial, ethnic and tribal lines to pray for the nation," said Pastor Scott Marques, the lead Elder for River of Life Church on his Facebook page.

Writing on their Facebook page, EFZ noted that prayers and worship have a very effect on the spirit and soul. The word of God at this point was the only way that the people of Zimbabwe could be healed from the stress, anxiety, pressures and disappointments they are facing.

"Zimbabwe and the Church cannot look back at this very hour. We carry a message of rebuke, judgment, hope and comfort as guided by Ezekiel 8-11 and 1 Chronicle 7:14. Only the word of God and the Holy Spirit brings peace and healing that helps the nation live another day and hope for tomorrow," read the message.

Lupote Villagers face starvation

Communities in Lupote village near Hwange face starvation as the impact of Covid-19 has increased the number of vulnerable families.

According to the local area councillor Mr. Cosmas Mwakiposa, many families are on the brink of starvation and the situation has been compounded by Covid-19 pandemic.

Situated about 350 kilometres from Bulawayo, Lupote ward, just like many areas of Matabeleland North has been severely affected by drought. This is largely because of the erratic and late 2019/2020 rains that affected crop yields for many families.

“We have many families here in Lupote who are on the brink of facing starvation as a result of poor yields. If the situation is not addressed, many families will wallow in poverty. The situation has also been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic”, he was quoted as saying.

The councillor further stated that despite valiant efforts that are being done by non-governmental organisations such as World Vision a lot of families now face starvation because the pandemic has made them to be vulnerable.

Councillor Mwakiposa also said that assistance that they get from the Social Welfare department was sporadic as their food relief program would



Cosmas Mwakiposa

take at time to be disbursed

“The Social welfare department gives to the old age , but they at times take more than 3-4 months to do that”, he said

The councillor also said that as a result of hunger rampant prostitution for underage girls as well as rise in crime has been rife in the Cross Dete shopping centre.

Echoing his sentiments, the hub chair for Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) in Hwange, Overseer Siyaphambili Moyo said that Hwange in general was affected by drought with many

families struggling to get the subsidised meal. The hub chair also said that they are devising plans on engaging different stakeholders who are doing food relief similar to the one that ZCA is doing in Bulawayo.

One Hwange youth, Kate Jubane also said that most of her peers are affected by hunger as a result of the closure of workplaces as a result of Covid-19.

“Most youths in Hwange are affected by hunger as a result of the closure of many Chinese projects that are in the area. Also most youths in the area relied on the tourism industry which is now completely closed”, she said.

Meanwhile Zimbabwe has experienced some of the harshest droughts in decades, but its situation has been compounded by currency and fuel shortages, low agricultural output and hyperinflation at 760 per cent that has made food prices unaffordable to many people. The UN estimated that 7.7 million people, almost half of the country’s population, were food insecure, meaning they lacked reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. More than 4 million of them live in rural areas and millions in towns and cities survive on less than US\$1.25 per day.

Cities and Towns Update

PLUMTREE: Citizens are being forced to purchase groceries so that they buy sugar from shops like Greens, Gain and Plumtree Bakery. The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) has started selling subsidised mealie-meal to both urban and rural residents. Total garage is the only service station with fuel.

MASVINGO: Police were not allowing people to go to town even those with exemption letters. Those who had boarded Zupco buses were returned home. Shops were closed early because there was no business.

HWANGE: Grain Marketing Board (GMB) delivered mealie-meal in Hwange and it is

being sold at ZWL\$70 for 10kg. The mealie-meal is sold section by section but it is still not enough.

KWEKWE: Soldiers and the police intensified their presence and the lockdown was restrictive today. All those who were queueing at different shops without clearance letters were taken to the police station to pay fines.

HURUNGWE: More police officers were seen and were turning back all those who were going to town without clearance letters. Bars are operating illegally whilst vendors, forex dealers and private cars have also started working.

TSHOLOTSHO: People were buying subsidised mealie-meal but due to corruption some shops were hiding the mealie-meal and some was bought by police officers. The mealie-meal is then later sold in other shops at a higher price.

LUPANE: It was business as usual. Zapalala was selling mealie-meal on the condition that you buy groceries too. People are wearing masks but are still not maintaining social distancing. Lupane State University (LSU) no longer has returnees as they are preparing for the institution to open. Mabhikwa Primary School has 19 returnees left.