



BAPTIST CONVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reg. No. 028-361-NPO

SECTION 21 Reg. No. 1998/017970/08

"IMPACTING LIVES"

COVID-19: HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR BAPTIST CONVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICA CHURCHES

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Churches are advised not to open during this level of the lockdown. However, we respect your right to fellowship and this right must be exercised with caution.
- 1.2 Church that open their services should adhere to the government regulations as stipulated in the Gazette at the beginning of every level. Church leaders, especially the pastor, should take the responsibility on behalf of the Church. Should there be a breach, a penalty will be placed on the responsible leader, and not excluding arrest, to demonstrate the seriousness and importance of ensuring that Churches too, are COVID-19 compliant.

2. NUMBERS

- 2.1 Only 50 people are allowed to congregate per service. The number includes the Pastor and spouse, ushers, the worship team, security etc.
- 2.2 The church leaders must know the length and breadth of the worship space, such that a 100 square metre space can hold no more than 50 persons to allow for the necessary social distancing.
- 2.3 To accommodate everyone, churches may consider "congregation load-shedding": More than one gathering per Sunday can be allowed, or Sundays and mid-week services can be arranged, and congregants encouraged to attend only one service and not two services per week.
- 2.4 Reduce services to ONE hour, and allow at least 30 minutes before the next one.

3. MONITORING

OFFICERS: Acting Secretary General Dr T Jentile, President: Rev. SB Ndebele, Deputy President: Dr T Jentile, First Vice President: Rev MC Serokolo, Treasurer: Rev. ME Makena, Minute Secretary: Mrs. T. Semanya

3.1 Every Church MUST have a COVID-19 task team which will have a monitoring system in place to manage the processes and regulations. **This team MUST register with the BCSA Regional Office.**

3.2 Every church MUST keep attendance register of all attendees at every service. The register shall consist of: The name and surname; Identity Numbers; Residential Address; Cellular number and Temperature.

3.3 Each Church MUST have a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation plan in place to:

3.3.1 Provide and display informative and educational aids to minimise transmission risk

3.3.2 Identify and protect vulnerable members of the Church

3.3.3 Clean all surfaces and shared equipment

3.3.4 Ensure good ventilation

3.3.5 Ensure only one person at a time is permitted in restroom

3.3.6 Manage sick members or attendees

3.4 All church members need to be frequently trained and educated about precautions and kept up to date with government regulations.

4. ATTENDANCE

4.1 It is advisable for congregants to sign up ahead of time. By Sunday all attendees are known. Church can define attendees per service by age range, so that members, say above 55 or 60, worship together. However, we encourage members above the ages of 60 and children to stay at home.

4.2 At the Church gate:

4.2.1 Pre-determined attendees MUST be screened for symptoms of COVID-19, including a symptom check as well as temperature assessment using the handheld Thermo Gun. No one with flu-like symptoms will be allowed at any service.

4.2.2 All attendees MUST wear face mask or scarf as provided in the Regulations, and there should be no personal contact.

4.2.3 Sanitisers and/or handwashing facilities with soap must be available at the entrance and all attendees must be sanitised. Regular hand wash is encouraged.

5. DURING THE SERVICE

- 5.1 Seating must be according to the “social distance” of the recommended distance between participants in every direction.
- 5.2 Only families that live together in the same house, may be allowed to sit together without social distancing norms.
- 5.3 Singing is prohibited because droplets are carried further when we sing and we also breath in more deeply in singing. Instrumental music or solo singing is encouraged.
- 5.4 No sharing of bibles, hymn books and Mic’s. Churches are encouraged to use overhead projectors or printed leaflets.
- 5.5 The preacher, could be allowed to unmask during a sermon. However, the preacher must keep a reasonable distance, and put back the mask after the sermon.
- 5.6 The “Holy Communion” can be administered, where there is no sharing of the “cup”.

6. AFTER THE SERVICE

- 6.1 There will be no socialising before or after the service. No tea fellowship, walk in groups or group chats in parking lots.
- 6.2 The pastor must observe social distancing when speaking to person outside the service.
- 6.3 No food of any sort may be provided, at any gathering, other than food hampers for the needy.

Yours truly,



Dr Thembelani Jentile (PhD, UFS)
Acting Secretary General,
Baptist Convention of South Africa