



# NORTHEASTERN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

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COVID19 Update 8 May 2020  
to NELCSA Pastors and congregations

Dear sisters and brothers,

Although we are now officially in Lockdown Stage 4, there are daily updates, amendments and changes to regulations presented by various ministries. This makes it extremely difficult to keep track.

If you study the guidelines, you will see that churches do not feature anywhere. The reference to counseling speaks to qualified, registered counselors.

A task team under the leadership of the Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba is preparing guidelines for churches linked to the SACC, which will be submitted to government, so that they can be included into the various stages.

The following has been done and is requested/suggested:

1. Web page <https://churchinaction.org.za> contains information relevant for congregations. "Resources&Tools" contains amongst others the (hopefully) latest funeral regulations.
2. After initially attempting to join all support activities together under the Department of Social Development, churches are now requested to continue with their diaconal projects on a local level, since the Department cannot cope. Ensure that guidelines are adhered to, and, where possible, obtain permission from the local police or magistrate. Do not stop the work. Continue strengthening the local ecumenical networks, since together we achieve much more than each church on their own.
4. Some churches already do service recordings in their churches with preacher, liturgists, readers and musicians, adhering to social distancing etc, with the understanding that it is allowed under "cultural recordings". No clear answer exists. If it is done, please ensure adherence to the health regulations, since the intention of all restrictions is to limit the risk of infection.
5. Thank you to all who participated in the Solidarity Run. Not only did it create a sense of community for all involved, it also contributed substantially to the solidarity fund of NELCSA.
6. The bi-annual Brass festival scheduled for 17 May in Wartburg, had to be cancelled. In stead, every body is invited to join in a **Virtual Brass Service** on that Sunday. Congregations are encouraged to "take a break" and invite their members to participate in that service. The recording is in progress, and the link will be shared before next weekend. It can also be accessed via [www.nelcsa.net](http://www.nelcsa.net) by clicking on the button: Brass festival 2020. It is being prepared in such a way that you can sing along with the hymns, and brass players can play along their voice during the brass pieces. The whole service will be less than one hour (for the sake of those with limited data) and parts of it will be available as voice recordings as well.
7. Finances. We are grateful to all members who continue to contribute via EFT or other methods to keep their congregations afloat. Regarding the **prescribed offerings**, congregations are requested to continue with their collection plans and not to re-arrange them. When services fall away due to the lockdown, and no offering is received, record a zero contribution for that Sunday. Should offerings be received by EFT, they are then recorded as such.

In closing I wish to thank all in leadership - pastors, councils, teachers, group leaders, musicians etc for their initiatives to live congregation life under these challenging circumstances. May we grow in faith and fellowship, despite everything!

I greet you with the watchword for May from 1 Peter 4, 10: "**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.**"

Yours in Christ

Horst Müller, Bishop