

**Ref: Reopening of churches for worship**

*Dear Bishop Margaret and Members of Chapter*

*Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*

The multidimensional nature of COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose challenges within all spheres of society, for example – health, human rights, social development, politics, economics, religion and Christian theologies - in particular, the pastoral and caring ministries, as well as the educational ministries. Its multidimensional nature is further exacerbated by factors of poverty, and particularly violence against women and children.

In response to the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa to open centres of worship during phase three, many churches have responded to the call by not opening their places of worship as yet. We commend the leadership of the Diocese of False Bay together with other dominations who have opted to delay the opening of churches until due consideration has been given to all guidelines and protocols communicated by the Department of Health.

I wish to thank Bishop Margaret and members of Chapter who through your action have shown solidarity of compassion with the people of God by giving clear direction and instilling hope in a time of despair, fear and social distancing.

We at ANSOC will continue to soak you in prayer as you speak into this challenging context of COVID-19.

We pray that God will continue to bless, protect and keep you and your loved ones safe during these difficult times. We pray for renewed strength and wisdom during this season of Pentecost and may all walk together towards the rising sun of hope, care and support knowing that God will make a way.

*Pentecostal blessings*

**Chaplain Rev Canon Dr Desmond Lambrechts Ph.D.**

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