

Dear Parishioners

Hope is growing. With the announcement of Lockdown Level 2 it appears that South Africa has passed the peak of Covid-19 infections. The change in weather and fresh growth contribute to the sense of excitement and new life. Of course, we are not quite out of the woods yet, but public responsibility demonstrates the unity of our response as a nation.

The Executive of St George's has recently met with the Dean to discuss the factors of reopening the church for services. Amid the uncharted waters that we are in as a church organization and faith community, I am appreciative of the insight of our leadership helping to navigate the complexities that could have various outcomes.

A refraining topic in my conversations with people is the safeguarding of mental health during this time. Uncertainty is probably the most draining and insidious form of stress that can easily deplete our resolve to weather the storms of financial, social and health crises. I can attest to the toll it has taken on me personally, faced with the constant change of context we are trying to interpret and plan within accordingly.

Various events that we had planned could not happen, but a highlight of St George's calendar is the annual spring lectures. This year, it will be offered online. One of our guest speakers is the Rev Dr Paul Siaki who will give a lecture on the future of the church, which will be followed up with a Zoom discussion open to the parish where they can engage with Dr Siaki. Another relevant topic is the critical issue of Gender Based Violence in South Africa. As part of the lecture series, we will have a panel of young people who will discuss aspects of gender roles and equality. Again, it will be followed up with a parish Zoom meeting. Because of the need to be informed about these issues and understanding how the church is responding, we need you to please participate.

As part of continuing reflection and conversation, you will soon receive blogs from our clergy and guest contributors on various topics. It will provide you with deeper insight to the thinking and daily life of the church community, which in turn is intended to offer parishioners a broad scope of knowledge.

In the last month, you would have received links to view choral Evensong, an awareness video on GBV, and the regular sermons and midweek reflections. St George's Church remains a vibrant community that seeks to draw diverse people into an encounter with God. The staff, council and ministry teams remain faithful in their service to you, and we thank you for your continued support to ensure that ministry find expression even during these trying times.

Rev Eben
August 2020