

# The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(The Anglican Church in Limpopo Province)

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## Ad Clerum – Winter

Dear Friends

This Winter Ad Clerum is coming toward the end of winter, such has been the fluidity of this time of COVID-19 and successive lockdowns, and the preparation for our Synod.

Our churches receive permission to open, with limited numbers, and then just as quickly close again. This makes planning and running events very difficult.

### A Big Thank you

What stands out for me is the way in which so many of our leaders have continued to plan for future ministry – the ALPHA and Haggai courses are two examples – and have had to then make alternate arrangements during the lockdown.

I am aware of Bible Study / Home Groups meeting virtually, of sermons and meetings being shared virtually on social media.

Thank you for the way in which you have stepped into the gap and continued to be the presence of God in the lives of people.

### Stress

In all this fluidity and inability to plan and implement properly, with the high numbers of infections and of the people known to us, often members of our family, who become infected and die, we carry a tremendous amount of stress.

More often than not we are unaware of the level of stress we are under, until something happens, and we find ourselves becoming angry over some little incident.

So please be aware that we are all under stress and let us consciously look after ourselves. If you believe it necessary, find someone to talk to and to destress as much as possible.

### Staff Developments

We have successfully elected three new Canons of the Diocese; Caroline Chaba-Mamabolo, Olive Senyatsi and Michael Makosholo are the new canons. I welcome them and am excited to be able to work with them.

I have also appointed Canon Michael Makosholo as the Acting Archdeacon of Lepelle.

Susan Elliot and Raphahle Malesela have undertaken to run the Guild of St. Mark, and with my full approval are redesigning aspects of this important ministry of our Diocese. Details of the new structure of the Guild will be forthcoming.

Diocesan Vision: To make disciples in vibrant, self-sufficient congregations established and linked to each other by sharing in resources; ministry & service; outreach & evangelism

Dean Dalcy Dlamini is our Dean of Studies and oversees the training of our ordinands.

### Diocesan Synod 2021

Our Diocesan Synod will be held from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August.

This will be an unusual event in that it is being held virtually. This therefore comes with its own set of difficulties, not the least of which is the unreliable and expensive data connections to which we have access.

Much planning has gone into this, and I am looking forward to it. However, please pray for all who will be attending from either their homes or parish hubs, and pray for our connectivity.

By the time you receive this Synod will either be about to begin or have concluded. My next ad clerum – the Spring edition – will give further details.

### Provincial Events

September will be a very busy time provincially for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa – ACSA.

On the 01<sup>st</sup> of September the Portuguese speaking Dioceses of Mozambique and Angola, will join to form a new Anglican Province, *The Anglican Province of Mozambique and Angola*. This is an historic event and one for which ACSA can be rightly proud.

Later in September the Synod of Bishops will sit for an Electoral College as they elect a new Bishop for the Diocese of Swaziland. This will be followed by the Synod of Bishops, and after that by Provincial Synod. Thereafter, the Anglicans Ablaze Conference will begin. All these events will be held virtually.

### Anglicans Ablaze 2021

Advertising for this and the registration portal has opened.

Jenny and I have registered and paid the very nominal registration fee. Will we see you there?

I enclose the AA 2021 Poster. This also includes the registration link.

### Confirmation Services

Although church services are permitted, the maximum allowed is 50 people or 50% of the seating capacity of the church, whichever is the smaller number.

Holding a Confirmation service, whilst technically permissible, can be impractical as these services attract families and friends and we would quickly exceed the number limit. I have therefore suspended confirmation services for now.

However, if your numbers are small and we can fit within the upper limits of people attending, please let me know so I can arrange to come to you.

### Vaccination against COVID-19

The vaccine roll-out has begun, albeit slowly. I am however aware that many are hesitant to receive the vaccine. I respect your views, but also wish to encourage that you consider receiving the vaccine.

I have had my second shot of the Pfizer Vaccine and had no ill effects. I am also of the opinion that this is the best thing and the right thing to do. I share this as a logical and thinking person, and as a committed Christian, with the prayer my example will assist your decision should you have any hesitancy about the vaccine.

Here is a quote from the Christian and Scientific magazine; *Biologos* ([https://biologos.org/?mc\\_cid=5000469c63&mc\\_eid=c658f3e31d](https://biologos.org/?mc_cid=5000469c63&mc_eid=c658f3e31d)) where they themselves quote Dr. Francis Collins, a world-renowned Scientist and Christian.

*For me, as a believer who is also a scientist, the vaccine seems like a gift from God. This is God's grace that has given us the ability to understand how this works, and to be able to design an approach. And it feels like God is giving us a chance to be his healers.* Dr. Francis Collins

#### Holy Communion

Many churches celebrating Holy Communion are blessing and distributing wine using small glasses. It has come to my attention that Archbishop Thabo is not in favour of this practice and believes it to be contrary to the lockdown regulations.

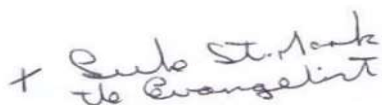
I must ask therefore that we respect the Archbishop's leadership in this and that we should stop consecrating wine and distributing it.

Regulations permit the celebrant to consecrate a small quantity of wine which only they consume on behalf of the congregation. The congregation then partake of the bread only.

#### In Conclusion

Please stay safe and look after yourselves and your people, remembering that we are all ultimately God's people.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bishop Luke Pretorius" with "Diocese of St. Mark the Evangelist" written below it.

#### Bishop Luke Pretorius

Diocese of St. Mark the Evangelist

Attachment: Anglicans Ablaze 2021 Poster