



5 July 2021

Dear Church Leaders,
Dear Pastors and Lay leaders
Dear Fraternal and LEAN members across KZN

Urgent letter as we face the onslaught of the third wave

We have been quiet the last few months as we've been in a process of discerning the role God has for the *KZN Covid-19: Churches Respond* project moving forward. We are still in the midst of this process, but we are aware that the pandemic is at a critical point as the third wave, in the form of the Delta Variant, wreaks devastation.

Our first response is to ask God in his mercy deliver us from all evil, and to keep our province and our people safe. We are deeply aware that this crisis has directly affected many of you as church leaders; the burden of care that has been placed on you has been huge, the financial burden of the ongoing lockdown has been significant, and the spiritual weight of leading people through a global crisis has been enormous. May we take a moment to stand with the "cloud of witnesses" who have gone before us and cheer you on as you continue to run the race marked out for you.

We would also like to highlight the 5 pillars within this project; areas where your LEAN, fraternal or Church could take some **immediate action**, or join some province-wide action, to provide faith, hope and love to your communities at this time:

1. PRAY

- a. **At Hospitals:** Please reach out to your local hospitals and start (or continue) to pray consistently. Under adjusted level 4 we can no longer gather, but where possible please let hospitals know that you are praying for them and find creative ways to connect with hospital leadership and staff (some LEANs have organized small family groups to pray from their cars or for individuals to prayer walk around the outside of hospital buildings for example; other LEANs have connected with hospital leadership and have been praying for staff and patients over WhatsApp; the LEANs in Umgungundlovu wrote to the District and received permission to pray outside every hospital in the District which has allowed for great coverage). If you are doing this already or would like help connecting with hospitals, please connect with Lisa at the [Prayer Tree Project](#) who is coordinating this work.
- b. **For our President, Provincial and local Leaders:** Our leaders need our prayers. We encourage you to reach out to your local leadership and offer your prayers of support, finding out from them what the specific prayer needs are. Again, we've seen some wonderful initiatives from LEANs in this regard.
- c. **Province-wide action:** For the month of July, please also join us for weekly Provincial Prayer gatherings: Thursday mornings for 30 minutes via Zoom (ID 821 5001 7610; Password PRAYER).

2. Provide RELIEF

- a. Hunger needs are going to go up over the coming weeks and months. Please urgently consider how you could mobilise resources locally to support those whose livelihoods are affected by these new level 4 restrictions.
- b. In addition to food relief, please also consider longer term solutions such as [Farming God's Way](#). Could every LEAN become the site of a model food farm for example? Or could each LEAN provide training to the most vulnerable in their community on growing a 1x2m [Garden of Faithfulness](#) for example?



(Please reach out to [Dan and Kerry](#) who are the KZN leads for this work if you would like to know more about this).

- c. **Province-wide action:** As we did in March 2020, we are again initiating an urgent relief drive so that we can start responding to the need around us. Would each church involved in the project which has the capacity to, consider a donation of R2000 to this central pot which could then be directed to parts of the province where the need is greatest (more details including banking details about this at the bottom of this email).

3. COMMUNICATION of key facts

- a. There is much fear and uncertainty that has pervaded our communities around the Covid-19 Vaccines. As a result, take-up (in addition to roll-out) has been worryingly low. Please help us to spread alternative messages backed-up by research. There are some extremely helpful [“ask the doctor”](#) short interviews on the [Church In Action Facebook](#) page which provide really simple and clear Q&A’s on many of the common questions going around (further links to these are provided at the end of this letter). In addition their [vaccination FAQ](#) in both English and Zulu is extremely useful and available in printed form.
- b. **Province-wide action:** There are many areas of confusion and concern around us now. Are there topics that you would like us to consider hosting webinars around? Get in touch with us and we can make sure this happens.

4. Provide CARE

Our communities are hurting! Please connect with your LEAN or other churches in your area and identify how you can reach out to local health care workers and offer support to them as this third wave peaks (for example some LEANs have provided food, prayers or debriefing services to health care workers). We’re also aware that you as clergy and pastors have had to endure a lot this past year and we are exploring ways of being able to provide spaces for debriefing in the future.

5. Engage in ADVOCACY

- a. Safety restrictions around mask wearing, social distancing and sanitisation are being poorly observed. Are there initiatives you could take to influence around this locally – for example reaching out to the management of the local post office where there are often long queues to encourage them on these things (or even offer practical support to them to help them in these areas).
- b. **Province-wide action:** As the provincial Steering Committee, supported by the KZNCC, we have also been lobbying the government around some of the areas of concern. Please see the attached letter we have recently sent to the Premier.

In all of this we encourage you to persevere and continue the good work that the Lord has called you to. He is our Emmanuel; he sees our tears, our tiredness and our fear and presences himself with us in all of this. He is also our resurrection hope, our strength, and our light through these times. May you know him in all these ways as we walk forward together, showing people the love, faith and hope of the Kingdom as we do.

Yours in faith,

The KZN Covid-19: Churches Respond coordination team

The [KZN Covid-19: Churches Respond](#) project is convened by the [KZNCC](#). We are a broad and inclusive coalition of Churches, Christian Associations, Ecumenical Networks and Ministers’ Fraternal committed to using our extensive footprint across the KwaZulu Natal Province to respond more effectively to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Lockdown and their respective impact.



Extra resources:

Vaccination Resources from Church in Action

- Q&A [Part 1](#) Explains how vaccines work and why they are important. It also explores common myths about vaccination.
- Q&A [Part 2](#) looks at a number of other fears and questions which are currently circulating on social media and in communities.
- Q&A [Part 3](#) looks at how vaccines are developed and if they're safe.
- Q&A [Part 4](#) looks at the AstraZeneca situation that happened back in February.
- Q&A [Part 5](#) talks about the journey of the vaccine before it gets to you.
- Q&A [Part 6](#) is with Dr Robert Kanwagi where they talk about his experiences with various vaccines. Robert Kanwagi, who holds a Master's degree in Public Health and is Programme Coordinator for the Ebola Vaccine Deployment Acceptance & Compliance Programme (EBODAC).
- There is also an extremely useful [vaccination FAQ](#) in both English and Zulu.

Provincial Relief Drive

In 2020 over R13 Million in relief was distributed through church networks which are a part of this project. We also specifically supported vulnerable clergy who were in need both in terms of food and PPE equipment. Thank you to all those who donated and to all those who participated in the distribution of relief. Through the network of LEANs in the province we were able to reach into some of the furthest, hardest to reach and vulnerable places in our province. We need to activate these networks again as the needs continue to rise. We have a target of raising R50,000 in this next drive and we need your involvement. Any donation is welcome and appreciated – if 20 churches each contributed R2500 we would reach this target in July. Bank details are below, and if you would like any further information on how we identify beneficiaries or distribute the relief across the province please let us know.

Name: KZNCC

Bank: FNB

Account no: 62601869243

Branch: 221-325