**Update from Zimbabwe May 12, 2020 by ELCZ Presiding Bishop Chemist Faindi**

Dear Dr. Knutson,

Thank you so much for checking on me. I trust I find you well.

We have four people who have died as a result of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe. Thirty-five are being treated for COVID-19. Tests are still going on.

Those who are resuming their duties in a company or any institution are tested to ensure one is free from COVID-19. This has come about as a presidential decree.

We are in our fifth week in our lockdown. People are still under lockdown but those categorized as essential services workers are allowed to go to work. However prescribed health measures are strictly followed. Things like social distancing, wearing of masks, use of sanitizer and general hygiene are observed.

Churches are still not free to come together for worship. Initially it was pronounced that 50 people can come together for worship but when enforcement agents come across such a gathering people are harassed.

Because of the time the lockdown has taken companies cannot keep the labour force they had. They are scaling down, leaving many out of employment.

Some of our church members are retrenched and this also affects the church financially. Some of our retired members, who survived from renting out their properties could not get any income during this lockdown period, because the government instructed property owners not to collect rentals from tenants, during the lockdown.

People are no longer able to buy food, at the same time, responsible authorities promised to provide food to needy communities but up to now nothing has happened.

The drought situation has come down very heavy on the people because we had a very bad season. Farmers have harvested very little to feed the nation. We now have serious food shortages. One can stand in a queue for four hours just for a 10kg bag of mielie meal (22lbs of maize). The queues are so long that time spent there increases the possibility of being subjected to the Corona virus. There is now a scramble for food.

I am now afraid to lose some of our pastors where parishes are not able to pay them a salary which is already below the poverty line.

The crime rate is going up, though politically it is relatively peaceful. The economy of the country has almost collapsed. Please keep on praying for us. Our salvation in this situation is from God.