

State Memorial Service for the late former President FW de Klerk in Groote Kerk, 12 December 2021

On 24 November 2021 the State requested us in writing, to make the Groote Kerk available for a state memorial service for the late former President FW de Klerk. The church council agreed to the request, and the service will be held on Sunday 12 December 2021. The service will be presided over by the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba.

We welcome the De Klerk family, faith leaders, guests and the State to our building, and would like to extend our condolences to the De Klerk family. At the same time, we understand and are sensitive to the discussions that emerged country-wide around the death of the late former President de Klerk.

The nature of these discussions and the emotions involved are a clear indication to us, and to all South Africans, of the deep-seated woundedness and trauma that many in our country still experience as a result of our history of suppression.

We also hear and support the calls for justice from the families of those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom in our country. We realise that we cannot speak about reconciliation without seeking justice and restitution.

The legacy of the abuse of human rights requires us to engage urgently in continued open and honest dialogue, and also in parallel actions intent on building mutual understanding and trust, and to achieve justice for victims.

The Groote Kerk Kaapstad continues to be aware, with deep remorse, of our own role in the historic injustice, and of our responsibility to collaborate actively in the process of working for justice, restitution, healing and peace. After all, we are also firmly convinced that this search for justice is at the heart of Christ's atoning message for all. South Africa has to overcome many socio-economic challenges and must bridge huge inequalities if we are to build real peace and a hope-filled future for all South Africans.

Therefore, we also support the call by Father Michael Lapsley who pointed out that *"The death of FW de Klerk provides us with an opportunity for a new national conversation about the deep woundedness in our society and the acknowledgement that apartheid was a crime against humanity."*

For that reason, our congregation makes our building, our resources and ourselves available for deep dialogues about the deep-seated trauma in our society and our joint search for healing.

We call on the ecumenical church and the inter-faith community to collaborate on all levels, to lead the people of South Africa in this process.

Our predecessors have brought us to where we are today. It is now our task to journey together on this road towards justice, that will lead us to peace. We cannot change the course of history, yet we can contribute to changing the consequences of our history. We all have to play a role in that.

We pray for the power of love, to draw us closer to one another, for the truth to set us free, and for the fulfilment of peace for all the people of our beautiful South Africa.

The Church Council of the NG Kerk Kaapstad – Groote Kerk

8 December 2021