**An open letter to our new Mayor**

Dear Mayor

On behalf of the Nelson Mandela Bay church leadership group, we wish to welcome you into the position of Mayor of our Metro. May God grant you wisdom and strength as you embark upon the challenge of serving this city and its citizens.

Your achievements since leaving our city have been an example to all, of the great potential of the people who come from here. You grew up here; you taught our children; you played a key role in the transition to a democratic city and you have served us in Parliament. You are no stranger to our streets or to our struggles.

We believe this city has the potential to be a great place in which to live. Our bay, beaches, people, culture, harbours, industry and university; our proximity to Addo and the Sundays Valley; and the Coega IDZ are all existing assets that could serve us well. There are pockets of excellence and good work to be found in many corners of this beautiful place.

Yet the daily lives of our citizens do not reflect this potential.

It is our view that:

1. The majority of us living within the city are poor, living off less than R400 a month.
2. We still live as divided communities.
3. Most live in fear for their safety when walking the streets: violence and crime prevail in many of our suburbs.
4. Our children are in schools that do not have sufficient resources to nurture their potential
5. Our youth cannot find work.
6. Business is constricted by unnecessary red tape.
7. Basic municipal services and infrastructure are failing or are inconsistent;
8. Corruption and incompetence are prevalent in the city’s administration

Nelson Mandela Bay is in crisis!

We do not seek to place the burden of responsibility solely upon either your shoulders or the city’s administration. Each and every one of us living within this city has a role to play. As both citizens and as the Church, we have remained on the sidelines for too long while our elected leaders lost their way. Our call to our congregants is to become active citizens – to do what is within their means to bring peace and development to our homes.

We are looking forward to meeting with you at the earliest opportunity, to brief you on the road we have travelled with your predecessors and to allow for us to exchange views on the challenges going forward

It is our prayer that you will be a leader who is both able and allowed to rise above the confines of narrow political and self-serving agendas. We pray that God will guide and bless you as we walk alongside you in building a great place to live. Welcome back to Nelson Mandela Bay.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop Lunga ka Siboto, Bishop Bethelem Nopece, Pastor Neville Goldman, Reverend Danie Mouton, Archdeacon Zweli Tom, Pastor Patrick Douglas-Henry, Pastor Mvusi Gwam