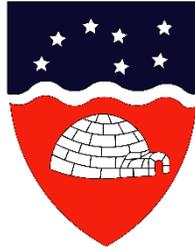


The Diocese of The Arctic

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



17 March 2020

Pastoral Letter to Diocese Re: Covid-19

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to update you on actions I am taking in response to the coronavirus known now as COVID-19.

From what we know this highly contagious respiratory disease has not arrived in our diocese. The group at greatest risk of having more serious complications from COVID-19 are the elderly and individuals with compromised immune systems such as those who have diabetes, weak hearts, tuberculous and other lung diseases.

Reports tell us most people who contact this disease are expected to have only mild to moderate symptoms and will have a full recovery, but the most responsible thing to do is act now in hopes of protecting the most vulnerable who may not be so fortunate and do all we can to protect the health and wellbeing of our parishioners and the wider community.

This COVID-19 has continued to spread because people have not followed medical advice. The Diocese of The Arctic will do its part to follow best medical advice and if we err, we will err on the side of caution. If my actions may seem extreme, unfaithful and out of line with all my communication regarding walking by faith I am very sorry, but I must make the following directives and pray that they are short lived.

Bishop's Directives to Guide Us During This Crisis

- 1. All services and meetings be suspended immediately until it is safe to resume. This suspension includes all Sunday services and other meetings that are scheduled to occur in our parish buildings.**
- 2. This is a time:**
 - To reinforce our communities by families praying and worshipping in their homes.
 - To pray that those around the world who are presently inflicted with this disease make and full recovery
 - To pray that the Lord may protect and deliver us all from this pandemic
 - To use other means of connecting and supporting each other, such as distributing church service pamphlets, keeping connected through radio, phone calls, FaceTime, FaceBook messenger, etc.
 - To remember many of our families are going to be seriously hurt financially due to all the fallout surrounding the coronavirus. Therefore, please help one another to the degree that you are able.
 - To also remember the church still needs your financial support; your parish would very much appreciate you mailing in your tithe and offering if able.
- 3. Worship Services:**
 - Clergy are being asked to distribute worship pamphlets and stay connected by radio, phone calls, the internet, social media and where possible meet online for church services.

4. **Marriages:**
 - Marriage ceremonies will be reduced to bride, groom, two witnessed and parents.
5. **Baptisms:**
 - Will be private ceremonies with only parents and sponsors
6. **Funerals:**
 - Funeral will be conducted at the graveside only.
7. **Travel:**
 - All community to community travel is suspended unless approved by the Bishop.
 1. All clergy leave is now restricted.
 2. Clergy are not allowed to travel community to community.
 3. Clergy are to discourage parishioners from community to community travel.
8. **Home Visitation:**
 - Clergy, who visit homes, are to practice social distancing. This is providing they are not ill and no one in the household is ill.
9. **Parishioners:**
 - Are asked to practice social distancing by staying home as much as possible.
10. **Self-Isolation:**
 - Any who are sick or have been in *contact* with sick people are asked to self-quarantine.

In closing please remember our LORD's Word in:

- **Deuteronomy 31:6** *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.*"
- **Hebrews 13:5**, "...I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- **Philippians 4:6-7** *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

God Bless You!

Faithfully Your Brother in Christ,



David W Parsons
Bishop of The Arctic