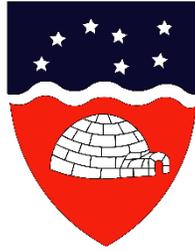


# The Diocese of The Arctic

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



November 16, 2020

**Pastorial Letter To Diocese**

**Re: Covid-19 in Nunavut**

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to update you on actions we must take in response to COVID-19. Presently, Nunavut is experiencing an outbreak. **Therefore, until further notice, in Nunavut all church gatherings for worship services, baptisms, and marriages are suspended immediately until it is safe to resume. Also, for Nunavut, funerals may only be conducted at the graveside, with a maximum of five people who must: wear masks and keep 2 meters/6 feet apart.** While churches gatherings in the NWT and Nunavik are permitted, they must comply with all health/government guidelines. Should a similar outbreak occur as what is now happening in Nunavut, church gatherings in these two territories will be suspended as well.

This virus is a highly contagious, respiratory disease. While most who contact COVID-19 are expected to have mild to moderate symptoms and will have a full recovery, we must protect each other, our elders and those who have had their immune systems compromised by diabetes, weak hearts, tuberculous and other lung diseases. Pray that those around the diocese/world who are presently inflicted with this disease will make and full recovery

Remember, this is not the first health attack upon humanity. Let's pray for God's intervention and not give into worry or despair. Life has always had difficulties. Jesus taught that rather than be overcome with worry, we are to cast our care upon Him, and to prepare for the storms of life, we are to build upon a sure and solid foundation. For the storms of life (worries and cares) the bible provides coping mechanisms. The first is building a relationship with God. Jesus said, "Cast your care upon me, seek first the Kingdom of God and come, learn from me." In Psalm 119 we are taught that God's word is a light to our path. So, we learn by being bible students.

Second is building relationships with others. God knows we will be lonely, so He wants us to build relationships with others. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." (COVID-19 seems to have originated from hell.) Jesus said, I want my Church, my people to be the light of the World.

Third, be the Light of Christ during such a time as this. This is time for Christians to be light and not hide away from the World, but to minister to it. Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, I am sending you, my church to be light in the world." So, as church, we are to stay connected with each other, and build relationships with others in our communities and support them. We can do this by praying for our governments and health authorities. Remember they are carrying heavy loads so prayerfully uphold them. If you know people in government and health care call, encourage, support, and pray with them. Above all, do not complain but follow their guidelines. Let's join them in caring and protecting each other. If you are sick or have been in contact with sick people speak to the medical center and self-quarantine.

Lastly let's help others cope. History has taught that ever since the pandemics of the first century, Christians have provided compassionate ministry to the communities at large. If you are well, pray about ways to care for those who are house bound. Ask what they may need. Do errands. Pick up groceries. Deliver care packages. Ask God the Holy Spirit to help you inspire and support others via phone calls, FaceTime, Facebook messenger and email. Keep connected, pray for one another, share home music videos and via FaceTime or Zoom have bible studies. In closing remember food was part of Jesus' ministry. So, eat when you are hungry, talk to others when you are lonely and keep connected through radio, phone calls and social media. Above all practice social distancing and stay home as much as possible.

Faithfully Your Brother in Christ,

David W. Parsons

Bishop of The Arctic