



ANGLICAN EAST NL

Pastoral Letter from Bishop Peddle on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

March 12, 2020

Dear Friends,

With the current situation arising with the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) across the world, recent media reports have indicated that people in our Province have been tested for the virus but, as of the time of writing, there have not been any confirmed cases.

Following official Health Care prevention guidelines, we strongly encourage the following to protect yourself and others:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the absence of soap and water.
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick
- Practising proper cough and sneeze etiquette. Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing and sneezing and immediately dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Staying at home if you are sick
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch areas such as toilets, bedside tables and door handles with diluted bleach or a regular household cleaner.

Regarding Liturgical practices, the Diocese of Toronto, which has had a significant number of cases of the virus, issued a Pastoral Letter which provides excellent advice for those participating in worship which I, as your Bishop, commend to you for usage in your parish effective immediately until further notice.

This includes the following, with some adaptation for our own Diocesan purposes:

1) Suspend the sharing of the common cup at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. Presiding celebrants are to consecrate both the bread and the wine, and to consume in both kinds, but to administer only the bread to the rest of the congregation. The Church's ancient teaching is that the whole Christ is received whether one receives only consecrated bread or both bread and wine.

2) Further to this, the practice of Intinction (dipping the bread into the cup) is forbidden in all forms. We also will not allow the use of individual communion cups in our parishes, unless this has already been the practice authorized previously. The common cup is an important symbol in our tradition, and it is our fervent hope that we can return to its regular usage very soon.

3) We are advising people to share words and smiles only, not handshakes or hugs, during the Exchange of the Peace. Those churches that have repositories of still water, for example fonts or stoops, are to refresh the water daily or discontinue their use at this time. We ask every Anglican to practice rigorous handwashing and to self-quarantine at home if feeling unwell. The use of Hand Sanitizer is strongly advised.

4) Collection Plates - The person-to-person passing of collection plates is to be avoided. Only sidespersons ought to handle and pass collection plates for others to deposit their offering. If that is not practical in your setting, plates or baskets can be put out in obvious locations and parishioners directed to them. Now is a good time to remind people of alternative ways of donating in your parish - direct deposit, online, e-transfer, etc. – which may become especially helpful if people are unable to come to church.

5) Anointing - Please note that the anointing of multiple people at corporate liturgies must be suspended at this time. The anointing with oil of a single individual on the face or head may continue in private settings only, where handwashing and sanitizing is possible both before and after the anointing. But in those places where healing ministries are normative during services, we encourage those who desire it to come forward only for the laying on of hands (on the shoulder or arm) with prayers for healing.

To read the Diocese of Toronto statement, visit here:

<https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/2020/03/02/bishop-advises-parishes-on-covid-19-liturgical-practices/>

For further information on COVID-19:

<https://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/coronavirus/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

As we move forward, we will provide further updates specific to Diocesan Liturgical practices as needed.

We ask your prayers for all those affected by this virus and those who work in our hospitals and healthcare system.

*O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people;
in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion
upon us and all who turn to you for help;
for you are gracious, O lover of souls,
and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and forever.
Amen.*

Yours in Christ,
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Peddle
Diocesan Bishop
Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador