

Bishop
The Right Reverend Robert Hardwick

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THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE *Anglican Church of Canada*

December 15, 2020

Grace and Peace be always with you.

On November 10th, 2020, Dean Mike Sinclair, in his capacity as commissary, announced the temporary suspension of public worship for our entire diocese and that the suspension would be revisited after Sunday, December 13.

On my recent return to Canada, I have been engaged in conversations with all the Anglican bishops in Saskatchewan; with our Evangelical Lutheran communion partners; been briefed by our link person on the Covid 19 response team; and was made aware of the recent unanimous recommendation of your diocesan executive committee. The shared opinion of all these conversations leads me to announce today that the suspension of all public, in person, worship will extend until January 15, 2021.

This decision is not made lightly. It is a decision beyond that required by the Government of Saskatchewan, but made mindful of the continued rise in community transmission and out of an abundance of precaution and concern for the health and wellbeing of all our members. The three Anglican dioceses and the ELCIC churches announce with me their shared decision to close all Churches and other buildings to public worship or any other public gathering effective immediately until, the above date, when the most recent Government restrictions will be revisited. With you I am extremely saddened by this necessity, yet acutely aware of the need for this precaution, having witnessed at first hand the harmful effects of this virus.

Notwithstanding, though in person worship services are suspended, Christmas is not cancelled. In similar fashion to our previous lockdown, worship services will be conducted online, using technologies including but not limited to YouTube, Zoom, or Facebook Live. I ask that those planning on line worship to please forward your service links to Ms. Cindy Seiferling at the Synod Office dio.quappelle@sasktel.net so that a list of online worship can be collated and shared with you all.

As we make the journey to Bethlehem, each in our own homes, we will remember that the Babe of Bethlehem came not to a Church or Temple but to a humble dwelling. May Christ's presence bless you and your home this Christmas as you ponder and treasure in your hearts, like Mary, the wonder of Immanuel, God with us. Born to such as you and me. Born to set us free. Born in a time of deep darkness to bring the light (of Christ) to us. John 1:5.

Thank you for the excellent efforts that you continue to make as you adjust in these pandemic times, finding innovative and different ways to be faithful in these times. Finally, I am seeking further clarification on guidelines for church aided food programs and will notify you as soon as I can.

Keep Safe and God bless you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Hardwick'.

The Rt. Revd. Rob Hardwick. Diocese of Qu'Appelle.