

The Bishop of Qu'Appelle
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THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE *Anglican Church of Canada*

March 7, 2020

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Dear friends in Christ, as the Corona Virus spreads around the world, dioceses and denominations are now taking extra precautions for hygiene during Eucharist and other services and gatherings. While we should not panic, we should be diligent in observing and practicing good hygiene protocols to ensure that parish life continues as normal as possible.

In addition to the usual good hygiene practices of frequent handwashing, covering your mouth when coughing, and staying at home if you are unwell, the following guidelines will be implemented in the diocese of Qu'Appelle:

1. If it is the usual practice to pass the offertory plate to parishioners I ask that people be invited to place their donations on a conveniently located plate instead.
2. Please refrain from handshaking or hugging during the Peace. There are all kinds of friendly alternatives including, a wave, eye to eye contact, smile, and bowing as gestures for greeting of peace.
3. At the end of worship, clergy or lay ministers will greet members of the congregation verbally only.
4. All serving at the altar table will wash their hands before the service and will use hand sanitizer before the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
5. Eucharistic Assistants will clean and revolve the chalice after each person has received the wine.
6. More than one purificator will be used during the distribution of communion of more than 10 people.
7. Only fortified altar wine, of at least 18% alcohol, be used. No home-made wine, or favourite cabernet, or grape juice, only approved altar wine.
8. Hand sanitizer will be made available to parishioners during a service and at meals.
9. Intinction (the dipping of the bread into the wine) is not permitted.
10. Individuals should decide for themselves whether to use the common cup.
11. It is more than acceptable to receive in 'one kind' only, or to abstain altogether and receive a blessing.
12. Parishioners who have compromised immune systems or are at a greater risk during this outbreak may choose to self-isolate themselves. Remember to stay in touch with them.

In addition to these guidelines, I ask that during this outbreak:

13. Clergy/Wardens communicate the above guidelines to their parishioners at the beginning of the services during Lent.
14. Clergy, Church Wardens and vestry ensure the following precautionary measures in the church are followed:
 - a. All door knobs, altar rails, the tops of pews and paper and hand sanitizer dispensers are wiped down with disinfectant wipes after each service (particularly when there is more than one service on a Sunday), since the virus can last for a few hours on hard surfaces.
 - b. Ensure that all toys in the nursery or Sunday School are cleaned after each service and to remove all stuffed animals from the nursery.
 - c. That all Eucharistic ministers and servers wash their hands before the service.
 - d. That chalice bearers be reminded or instructed to correctly wipe and revolve the chalice after each person and to cover the chalice is a person tries to intinct.
 - e. That best hygiene practice be observed in all pastoral contacts.

Finally, a message to clergy and lay leaders. In our love for our congregations we often sacrifice our own health in service to God and the Church. This is not a time to do so. Take all necessary precautions but be mindful of your own health. I am sure that, neither you nor I, would want to be responsible for the further spread of this virus or put others at serious risk. If you feel ill, even on a Sunday morning, give notice to others and stay home. If there are no other clergy or diocesan Readers in your congregation, forward your prepared sermon to the Wardens. Morning Prayer is always an option. If you have some warning, contact the Diocesan Office, and we will do our best to find a supply priest/deacon or diocesan reader.

Remember these are precautionary measures. Measures applicable for a possible Covid 19 outbreak in Saskatchewan, or in any time of seasonal flu or contagious outbreak.

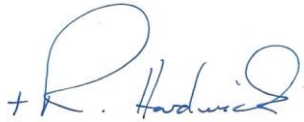
Above all, remember to pray at all times and do not be afraid.

“Holy and gracious God, give us strength to meet the health crisis growing in our world. Enlighten researchers that they may discover the right vaccine against this disease. Bring together agencies around the world that they may work together to eradicate the virus. Guide the doctors and nurses and all medical staff working with those who are infected that they may be protected as they care for their patients. We pray for those who are ill or isolated because of this virus, that they may know your love and care as it comes to them through human hands. We pray also for those who have died and for the bereaved that they will know the consolation of your love. Keep us mindful of our responsibilities during this time of anxiety and enable us to do all we can in our homes, churches and communities to alleviate the risk of spreading the virus. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen”
(Slightly adapted prayer from the Episcopal Church – Diocese of Virginia)

If new information about Covid-19 is made available we will adjust the above precautionary measures accordingly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

You remain in my prayers

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ R. Hardwick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

The Right Reverend Robert Hardwick.
Bishop of Qu'Appelle