



CATHEDRAL CHURCH *of the* REDEEMER

OFFICE OF THE DEAN | The Very Rev'd Leighton Lee

604 First Street SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 5H8

TEL 403-269-1905 EXT. 116

leighton.lee@anglicancathedralcalgary.ca

www.anglicancathedralcalgary.ca

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My Dear Friends,

I am writing to inform you that earlier today, I had a conference call with the bishops of the Province of Rupert's Land and a call with the Archbishop concerning worship in the Diocese. The upshot of these conversations is that, effective immediately, all public services in the Diocese of Calgary, are suspended until March 31, 2020. **This also means that all services for Sunday, March 15, are to be cancelled.**

I know this is a very sudden development, and that plans that are already in place must be abandoned with very short notice. Please understand that this decision hasn't been arrived at lightly. But given the fact that as of this writing, the number of cases in Alberta has gone from 29 to 39 and that many members of our congregations are part of the vulnerable sector, the only prudent response is to suspend services of worship. We have a duty to protect them.

What's more, we have a duty to be part of the effort to flatten the curve in the hopes that we can stop this virus from gaining a terrible foothold here as it has done in other places.

What I am *not* asking you to do is go dark like the Broadway theatres. Be in constant touch with your people. Reach out using all of the wonderful digital tools at our disposal. And, if you are able, live-stream services. There is no template for how individual parishes should respond to this extraordinary circumstance – please be creative! This is not the time for liturgical scrupulosity.

The Archbishop is most concerned that we keep one another in prayer, and do so with a particular seriousness on Sunday mornings when we would all otherwise be in church. Parishes with the ability to live-stream services are encouraged to do so. Our churches are not closed for business – far from it. But we are not gathering publicly for worship for the present moment.

This is a rapidly developing situation and we're all doing our best to keep abreast of things as they emerge. Please bear in mind that situation changes from day to day, and as leaders, it is incumbent upon us to be nimble and adaptive in carrying out our mission and ministry.

We are living the Lenten wilderness experience in real time this year. But we are a resurrection people and so we look with confidence and hope to the day when we

all be able to gather together in the flesh. In the meantime, pray without ceasing for the vulnerable, the sick, the anxious, the caregivers, and the complacent. Pray for the leadership of the Primate and the Anglican Church of Canada, our Diocese, and each of our parishes.

I realize that there are a number of views on the wisdom of taking this action. Know it has not been taken lightly. It has been taken out of an abundance of caution and with an understanding that we are doing our best to address this situation in ways that are reasonable and pastoral. Please receive this will generosity and in the spirit it is intended.

With prayers, love, and deep friendship,

The Very Rev'd Leighton Lee

Commissary