



THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE

Anglican Church of Canada

St. Cuthbert's House
1501 College Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 1B8

March 24, 2020

To Clergy, Churchwardens and Vestries:

Because of Covid-19, the past few weeks have radically changed how we gather as church. It is presenting new challenges for those in leadership. One of the concerns we have heard expressed very quickly is about finances. With gathered worship, study groups and fundraisers cancelled and renters no longer being able to use our buildings, congregations are concerned about how to pay for continuing expenses while meeting the needs for ongoing ministry. Depending on how long we must work together to flatten the curve the budget of our churches is being stretched. Here are some things to help us all through this crisis.

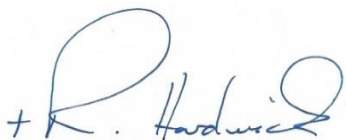
1. As leaders in your congregation, **pray**. Pray for all the people affected by this health crisis, those working on the frontlines and for your community. Pray as well specifically for the finances of your parish and the diocese. Here is a prayer provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (slightly modified by the Diocese of Niagara):
Creator of all we enjoy, we give you thanks for the countless people who have gone before us in the leadership of this church. We know that the Holy Spirit inspired some as they longed for this church, others as they built this church and still others as they lovingly and boldly led this church through times of abundance and times of scarcity. Help us to be bold as we model giving of time and money to this parish. Make our bold and generous financial offering a symbol of both our integrity and our gratitude. Help us to encourage giving, just as you did while physically teaching among your disciples. Amen.
2. **Be generous.** As much as your financial circumstances allow, continue your offering to your parish. When possible, supplement your offering with additional giving—perhaps donating the money you are saving by not going out for coffee, driving to see friends, taking a holiday, etc. Your generosity is needed by your church and will be a sign of hope to the congregation you serve as clergy and lay leaders.
3. **Communicate to your parishioners** and the wider community why the church needs money now. Inspire generosity by letting people know how we are being church in this moment. Write out your parish's case for support. Keeping your appeal to one page, you may want to address one or all the following: the creative ways in which your parish clergy and lay leadership are continuing ministry by providing pastoral care, personal support, teaching and worship opportunities online or by phone; additional support needed for parishioners and

community members most vulnerable to health and economic impacts due to COVID-19; and a gap in this year's operating budget because of cancelled in-person gatherings, postponed events and changes in investment returns. Be clear with a specific call to action at the beginning and the end. Invite people to consider additional gifts or to double their regular offering if possible. *Please see the sample letter below for a way to communicate about this with your parishioners.*

4. Almost 80% of the way giving occurs is when congregations gather; we are not gathering now. **Provide options for how people can give.** Ask those who give by cheque to mail in their cheques and/or give a number of post-dated cheques. If your parish has the capacity for pre-authorized giving/deposit, invite those who are not giving through pre-authorized means to sign up for that now. Invite people to give to your church through electronic means such as etransfer, PayPal or Canada Helps. Canada Helps, www.canadahelps.org, may be the easiest since every church has a page through them; activate your page if you have not already done so to enable people to donate online. Eliminate any barriers there may be that block people from giving. *Please see the sample letter below for a way to communicate about this with your parishioners.*
5. **Thank people** who give by phoning, emailing or mailing them a thank-you card. In a time when we cannot connect face to face, a personal thank you is also a way of connecting and checking in with people.
6. As congregational leaders in your parish, this is a challenging time. If you find you have questions that need answers or concerns you want addressed, **ask for help.** If you want to discuss stewardship in this time of crisis, contact Cheryl Toth at stewardship@sasktel.net. If you are worried that your parish may not be able to pay your ongoing expenses or diocesan Fairshare, contact Executive Officer Shelley Baron at eo.dio.quappelle@sasktel.net or Bishop Rob Hardwick at bishop.rob@sasktel.net. We may be working from home but we are still only an email or phone call away.

This is a difficult time for our churches and our communities. But it is also a time for which our Lord has prepared us. As Christ's disciples we are formed to be people of prayer, compassion, courage, mercy, generosity, and hope. Our communities and the world need us to live out our faith in ways that make a difference for us all. May God's blessing be upon you.

In Christ,



Bishop Rob Hardwick



Archdeacon Cheryl Toth, Stewardship Officer

Date

Dear friends in Christ,

The current health crisis in our country and around the globe has changed some of the ways we do things. We cannot gather in the ways we did just a few weeks ago. Our public events and fundraisers are cancelled. Our renters cannot use our buildings. But some things have not changed.

We are still the church. We may not be in our building but we are still connecting with one another by phone and through online study groups or worship services. We are still providing pastoral care by phone and, when needed and appropriate, visits in hospital or care facilities. We are planning to meet the needs of people in our community who are affected by illness or loss of income by *[providing gift cards for groceries, delivering needed essential items, keeping at-home prayer vigils, daily phone check-ins for those homebound, or whatever your church is planning to do]*.

The ministry of the church is continuing. And we need your continued financial support to meet ongoing expenses and overcome the loss of income from cancelled events and rental opportunities. If you have been mailing in your offering or give through pre-authorized giving, thank you! If you have not, please consider doing so. You can also give online through Canada Helps. Go to www.canadahelps.org and search for *[name of your church]*; once you have found the page, donate. We ask you to be as generous as your financial circumstances allow so that we can be the church Christ is calling us to be in this moment.

Please remember that we are only a phone call away. Do not hesitate to let us know if you, a family member or a neighbour need the ministry of your church. Continue to keep us in your prayers as we do you.

In Christ's name,