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DIOCESE OF YUKON ✚
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

March 19, 2020

COVID-19 update #3

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 NRSV)

In times such as these we really need to keep in mind the promises we have in God. Often when I find myself thinking that the world is going crazy around me I find myself turning to that verse from Romans. It helps me to remember that no matter what is going on in the world God's love prevails and is the one constant that I can trust.

Yesterday health officials declared a public health emergency in Yukon. There are various reasons why this step has been taken at this time. If you haven't seen the announcement I encourage you to take a look.

I believe that the Diocese of Yukon is the last diocese in Canada to get to this next stage I must now announce. **All worship services (Sunday and mid-week) in all parishes in the Diocese of Yukon will be suspended until further notice following your services scheduled for this Sunday, March 22nd.** I am well aware that some of you will think I am going too far but it is the right thing to do. We must do our part to contribute to "flattening the curve" and ensuring health and safety for our clergy, our parishioners, and our communities.

Other Parish Activities: All parish programs and meetings are to be suspended. This includes music groups, vestry or church board, bible study, etc. Some of these groups can continue to meet through platforms such as ZOOM. If you need access to ZOOM for bible study or parish committees please contact me. Parish offices are to be closed to the public. Please make sure that a phone number is posted on the door for emergency contact.

User Groups: Some of our parishes have groups using the space. I consider them to come under the same heading as "Other Parish Activities".

Tenants: such as AA, etc. As a public health emergency has been declared there is now the expectation that these groups will follow the directions of the government health authorities.

Please ensure that all buildings and offices are cleaned and sanitized.

Financial Concerns. I am aware that there are great financial concerns for our parishes and for the Diocese with the cessation of worship services. Please remember we may not be having services but we still have bills to pay. It can be a bit scary trying to make sure our clergy and ministry of presence people receive their pay and that parishes are able to pay their bills. Consider how you might be able to help.

For those in Whitehorse or travelling to Whitehorse, the Cathedral is going to be open Tuesday to Friday from 9:00 am to noon if you are seeking a quiet place for prayer. Please remember social distancing guidelines. Hand sanitizer is available for your use. The rector/dean can be reached at (867) 325-4854.

I would ask that we all do our best to ensure that the vulnerable in our communities are safe. Pick up the phone and have a conversation to lift someone's spirits. Clergy and other pastoral leaders should be ensuring that they contact parishioners on a regular basis to keep in touch. Don't be afraid to pray over the phone. Post updates on your Facebook pages. Keep up to date with the national church's website and the diocesan website. Bishop's Council will be determining the best way to do some online services. In the meantime there is a great deal to choose from on the above noted websites.

As I write this I am reminded that today, March 19th, is a Holy Day. It is the day dedicated to Saint Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth who was married to the Virgin Mary and the earthly foster-father of Jesus. The opening sentence for the day is from Psalm 84.3. ***Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you.*** We may not be in the physical church building but we ought always to be praising. We continue to be blessed beyond measure. And we still pray:

Almighty God, accept all we offer you this day, and give us generous hearts to serve you in all who claim our help. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are still the church. We are still the community of faith. We are still called to love and to serve in the name of the Lord.

May God richly bless you, protect you and shower you with an abundance of mercy and love;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Yukon". A small cross symbol is written above the first letter "L".