



**DIOCESE OF YUKON** †  
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

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April 15, 2020

Alleluia! Christ is Risen.

It has been almost a month (March 19th) since I wrote that letter saying that we had come to the point of ending services for the time being. It seems as though I just wrote that letter. Yet at other times, it feels like a very long time ago. As you know, those restrictions and measures have not changed for the Diocese or for the regions in which we serve.

I want to say thank you. Thank you to each of you for the continued work you are doing to reach out to your parish. Thank you to parish leaders for joining in on zoom conversations. Thank you to congregational members who have gone online to take part in worship. Thank you to parish leaders using digital resources for bible study and virtual coffee and various other ventures. It certainly is a learning experience that will continue. We are in the process of learning how to include participation from various parishes in a Diocesan service. Keep praying for us.

There have been some questions regarding funerals; what we are, and are not, allowed to do. Many of our communities have different practices, traditions, and customs. We are waiting for the final word from our contact with health authorities. In the meantime:

- \* Keep to gatherings of less than 10, including the ministry leader.
- \* All participants must maintain a 2 metre distance **unless** they are from the same household
- \* Ministry leaders must wash their hands before and after the gathering.
- \* Do not touch individual people for the blessing. Simply bless the gathering as a whole.

As we entered Holy Week, I received an email sent out to the House of Bishops. It was a letter from the National Indigenous Bishop. I am including some of that letter within this letter and ask that you pass it on to the Indigenous leaders in your communities. I will also be posting that letter on our Diocesan website. You could point your Indigenous leaders to the website for the full document. [anglican.yukon.net](http://anglican.yukon.net)

Here is part of the letter from The Most Rev'd Mark MacDonald:

*Dear Relatives,*

*To act in unity and communion, I would like to ask you to help me and all of us in these ways:*

*1 - Seek and Trust God. This is the most important thing of all. In the midst of many pressing, urgent, and dangerous demands, some people forget the priority of Spirit in this life. In my experience, the elders never forget that. Jesus teaches us that we must seek first the power, love, and grace of the World to Come, the Kingdom of God, and all other things will follow in a good way.*

*2 - Protect Life. - Already, we are hearing of communities that are dealing with this virus. If it breaks out in others, it will be devastating. I have consulted with our Indigenous elders, Indigenous bishops and clergy, and other leaders over the past few weeks. We have all concluded that, for the sake of the elders and other vulnerable ones, we must implement action that will keep people safe. In different diocese you may have different guidelines - some have said worship only in groups less than 10, some only in groups of 5 or less, some restrict it completely - and you must all restrict your gatherings to what is safe and what your leaders advise. The most painful aspect of this is funerals, as we have heard from all discussions. The consensus is absolutely clear, however, that we must limit our funerals to small groups of immediate family at the graveside, celebrating our memorials later, when it is safe. With this consensus, I must ask you, as the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, acting with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle, to put these safeguards in place as you undertake our usual and constant spiritual care for those passing from this life to the next and for the loved ones they leave behind.*

I encourage you to continue maintaining contact with members of your parishes. Have you developed phone trees? I was speaking to one of my sisters this morning and they are having virtual coffee time. Some join by phone and some by video. My sister said: “all participants are voicing their joy at the connections they are making; connections they never had when they were meeting face to face on Sundays”. Although not meeting face to face is frustrating, I believe there are incredible opportunities to do more toward building kingdom than we have taken advantage of in a very long time.

May God continue to richly bless each of you.

**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leahy' with a small cross above the first letter.