



The Office of the Metropolitan of Ontario The Anglican Church of Canada

The Most Reverend Anne Germond
Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario

On the Safe Reopening of Our Churches

A letter from the Ontario House of Bishops to the faithful in Christ

Friday, May 15, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you, most especially during this difficult time of pandemic.

In the words of that glorious hymn *For the Beauty of the Earth* we raise ‘our sacrifice of praise’ for each one of God’s perfect gifts on earth and in the skies given so freely to us. We give thanks for the gift and joy of human love which is given and received through the work of human hands and minds as it works to heal the sick, comfort the sad, and find a vaccine to end this coronavirus.

Bit by bit our leaders are taking tentative steps to open up the country, and here in Ontario the Premier has just announced what Stage 1 looks like in our communities.

While we share the desire of many other churches in the province to physically gather in-person to worship our Heavenly Father, we are not adding our voice to petitions of the Premier. The well-being and safety of all our parishioners and the communities we serve is uppermost in our hearts and minds as we carefully plan for the eventual reopening of Ontario’s many Anglican churches. We will be taking a cautious and measured approach in the days ahead, in consultation with medical experts and the leaders of our dioceses, including our executive officers, chancellors, and liturgical officers.

We remain committed to working with parish leaders to equip them to honour the various protocols that will enable us to worship safely in due course, and to keeping you informed about all decisions that are made.

Until that time, we will continue with our online worship, respecting all of the provincial directives in place. As we adjust to the ‘new normal’ in our lives, the unspoken language of understanding and cooperation and concern for each other is evident as we remember to physical distance, wear our masks, wash our hands, and pray without ceasing. In our churches online worship continues unabated and we continue to stay connected with each other in new and meaningful ways. Who would have ever thought that coffee time by Zoom would be a thing?!

In the midst of this time of uncertainty, we ask you for your patience and your prayers as we continue to be apart – but together in the One who stood among his fearful disciples and offered them His Peace. May that peace, which passes all understanding hold you gently during this time of pandemic.

“Peace be with you.”

Metropolitan and Archbishop of Algoma and Moosonee

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