



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA

Anglican Church of Canada

March 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

First let me say your spiritual witness is very important when anxiety is running high. We know that our scriptures tell us that as believers we must put our trust in God. Know that my prayers are with you all as we navigate these extraordinary circumstances.

It is important that we all stay connected in the days to come. I am deeply grateful to all our leaders for the creative and proactive ways in which they are reaching out to our people and beyond. We're grateful for technology like Zoom, Skype and conference calling capabilities that will help us maintain our sense of the diocesan and parish family. Please call each other – be present to each other – be *Christ* to each other.

By now you'll have received the communication to say that we have closed the synod office and that we are to work remotely for the time being. In addition to these internal directions, we are now in receipt of wider protocols from the provincial and federal governments to help flatten the pandemic curve in Ontario. Close adherence to these messages is crucial; we as a diocesan family must do our part in protecting the most vulnerable among us as we monitor the COVID-19 situation.

Although the synod office has physically closed, arrangements have been made through our department directors to facilitate the smooth running of our day-to-day diocesan business as much as is possible during this time. Operations-specific protocols are being worked out and communicated to those who will need occasional access to Cathedral Place. I urge all our parishes to take similar steps. It is crucial that we do our part to slow down the transmission of this virus.

Finally, please, *please* take every precaution for you and your families in order to be safe. Practice heightened hygiene, stay home and minimize contact in groups, stay in touch, and be gentle with yourselves. I thank you in advance for all that you'll be doing to support your parishes and the diocese as we find our way forward, with hope and compassion.

Blessings to you all.

In Christ,

Bishop of Niagara