



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA

Anglican Church of Canada

TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

TO BE READ AT ALL SERVICES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020

Dear friends:

As I mentioned in my letter last week, we have been closely monitoring the outbreak of the coronavirus, COVID-19. There has now been confirmation of a travel-related case within our diocesan boundaries.

While the Public Health Agency of Canada continues to assess the risk associated with this virus as low, as a faith community we must be particularly diligent in our hygiene practices for the wellbeing of our communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.

In light of this, I have made the decision **to suspend the sharing of the common cup at celebrations of the Eucharist**. Priests are to consecrate both the bread and the wine, and to consume in both kinds, but to administer only the Body of Christ to the congregation. This is in keeping with the Church's longstanding teaching is that it is sufficient to receive communion in one kind.

In addition to the measures I announced last week, which include a contact-free exchange of the peace, I am also asking parishes to receive offerings from a stationary location, rather than passing a plate, and counters are asked to be diligent in the washing of their hands.

While these liturgical customs are very important to us, out of an abundance of caution, we feel that it is important to change our practices until further notice to mitigate risk and anxiety in our communities. Together, these efforts will help ensure the wellbeing of our communities and those we serve.

As we continue to journey through the holy season of Lent, I would ask for your continued prayers for all who are ill with this coronavirus, for those who are caring for them, and for healthcare workers and researchers working to limit the virus spread. Please be assured of mine for you, now and always.

Sincerely,

Bishop of Niagara