



Montreal, 13 March 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you know, the situation with regards to COVID- 19 has been changing very rapidly in the past few days. Our own primate and the Bishops of Montreal and Quebec provided us with further advice as to how we might make our church practice safer in order to minimise potential virus transmission, and we had indeed taken steps two weeks ago in order to do just that.

However, as the situation continues to develop throughout the world, current scientific advice seems to point towards preventative reduced social contact and social isolation when necessary, together with all the other hygiene measures already well known, in order to decrease the spreading of this disease. Premier Francois Legault has asked returning traveller to go into voluntary quarantine for 14 days, which means that both Deborah and I will be at home until at least March 28 as we were both away abroad.

As a community of faith, we have a range of priorities and concern. We face the delicate balance of keeping a cycle of corporate prayer going while not putting any of our frailer and at-risk members in danger for their health.

Given the current status of the pandemic, we have therefore decided the following:

1. All Eucharistic services will be cancelled this Sunday 15 March. We hope that you will all want to make time to pray with the community that you normally join by downloading the relevant bulletin from our website <https://www.montrealcathedral.ca/category/all/sunday-bulletins/>, so that at 8 am, 9 am and 10.30 am, 6pm, there will be members of the Cathedral community linking through prayer across Montreal. We are still evaluating the possibility of sharing the sermon from our planned guest preacher, the Rev'd Canon Jesse Zink, through video or at least as a text. A link will be placed on our website.
2. The cathedral building will remain open throughout the day on Sunday so that people who wish to come to pray may have that opportunity. Normal opening times will operate during the week.
3. Evensong will be sung behind closed doors at 4 pm and broadcast as normal on radio VM. Please join in listening to that service from home on the radio (91.3 FM or on the internet).
4. We will maintain weekday Eucharists at 12.15 in order to ensure the continuing round of worship and prayer in the cathedral. Communion will be in one kind only.
5. Morning and evening prayer will also be maintained.
6. Living until we Die discussion this Sunday, Forum and the quiet day planned for Saturday will be cancelled.
7. The AGM planned for Sunday 22 will be postponed and a new date will be set as soon as possible.

As you know, this is very much a developing situation, and we will re-evaluate how we go forward in the course of next week based on current information. We will keep you informed.

In order to be sure that all members and friends of the Cathedral receive this message we are using many distribution lists and platforms to distribute. You may receive this message more than once, we thank you for your understanding and patience.

Meanwhile, please remember that we are first and foremost a praying community, and as such we need to make space and time to hold before God all those directly affected by this pandemic, those who are looking to limit it and the scientists working to discover a cure. And we should hold one another in our prayer too, particularly those who are at risk, vulnerable or quarantined. At this time, we are also reminded to look after one another and so to contact all those we know who are isolated and who might be anxious: telephone and internet are not restricted, so please make use of them to bring comfort to those who need it.

In these uncertain times, we remember that God, whose son Jesus brought peace in the middle of the storm, will be with us and give us creativity, courage and strength as we come to terms with this current challenge.

May God's blessing be upon you in the coming weeks.

Best wishes