



St. Mark's Anglican Church

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March 20, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers of St. Mark's

Grace and peace be with you all – the grace of God and the peace of Christ as Bishop Todd reminded the clergy of the Diocese recently.

Let my first word be one of thanks. The community of St. Mark's is strong, healthy and vibrant. In this time of considerable uncertainty with COVID-19 updates changing on a daily basis, what a gift the integrity and beauty of our life together is to each other, and as importantly to the world around us. We are gracious, caring and hope-filled followers of Jesus by reason of our baptism. It is who we are. And I thank and praise God for all the ways in which I see you living your faith with courage and authenticity. You are looking out for each other; you are reaching out to those who are vulnerable; you are wanting to know how you can help... and you are praying.

Less can be more, at times like this. I simply want to update you on plans the wardens, our parish nurse and I are currently working on.

First, we have launched today a care network which I am hoping will ensure that all regular attenders are connecting with each other. We have organized our parish list into a number of 'clusters' and have invited certain individuals to be responsible for keeping in touch with those on their assigned lists. Some lists will be self-explanatory – choir members, chancel guild teams, greeters and sidespeople. Other 'clusters' have been assigned. On your behalf I wish to thank all those who have agreed to be callers. The callers' job is simply to keep in touch and to relay any needs you might have to the office. Christine Fournier will then relay messages to the wardens, Debbie and me so that together we can discern how we as a parish might best respond. Bottom line, please be in touch immediately with either your caller or with the office if you are in need of assistance (ph. 519.752.6451 or office@stmark.on.ca).

Second, I have asked Dan Walker to set up a COVID-19 page on our website which he will keep updated. This will be your 'go-to' for most recent information. It includes Diocesan announcements, pastoral letters, links to healthcare information and resources approved by Debbie and prayer resources. I am including some of those prayer resources in the body of this letter as well. I encourage you to keep a close eye on this page.

Third, you will have access this Sunday to our first virtual worship offering – Morning Prayer for the Fourth Sunday in Lent. You can access it at this URL: <http://stmarks.on.ca/online-worship-services>. This is a work in progress so please feel free to let us know how we can improve the experience for you. I am grateful for Canon Bob's assistance in leading the liturgy and for Dan's expertise behind the camcorder.

Fourthly, Christine Fournier, Neil Dunning and Dan Walker and I will be working closely to keep you informed. Christine does great work in updating our St. Mark's Facebook page. Please remember that you do not need to be on Facebook to access our Facebook page. Simply type 'St. Mark's Brantford Facebook' into your search engine and follow the link. Neil Dunning tweets regularly. Please look for an email mid-



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week advising you of any announcements, resources and information regarding Sunday worship. We may also notify you later in the week of the readings for the coming Sunday and of those on our current and long-term prayer list. Please continue to let Christine know of your prayer requests with the permission of the person being prayed for.

Fifthly, your wardens and I are meeting regularly to review our parish pandemic plans. We will likely move to a remote format using a video-conferencing service in accordance with public health guidelines. Please let us know if there is anything you would like us to discuss.

Finally, as I mentioned above I include some prayer resources for you to peruse. Regular prayer is essential at a time like this – as much for ourselves as for those for whom we are praying. I strongly encourage you to consider a format for daily prayer and for daily devotional reading. This time is a God-given opportunity for us to refresh and to deepen our relationships with God and with each other. I urge you to grasp the opportunity with both hands. Again, please be in touch with me personally if I can assist in any way with identifying a resource which works for you.

Daily prayer resources

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.engineering.commonprayer&hl=en_CA

Daily devotional reading

<https://www.bibleinoneyear.org/>

<https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/>

<https://henrinouwen.org/resources/daily-meditation/>

Please feel free to suggest any others you find helpful. We can add them to our resource section.

Let's do whatever we can by God's grace to stay connected and to keep looking out for each other. Please know that the wardens and I are here, praying and working hard to ensure that we emerge from this time as strong, committed and inspiring followers of Jesus Christ.

God's continued abundant blessing on you all.

Tim+