



OFFICE OF THE DEAN | The Very Rev'd Leighton Lee

604 First Street SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 5H8

TEL 403-269-1905 EXT. 116

leighton.lee@anglicancathedralcalgary.ca

www.anglicancathedralcalgary.ca

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Dear Friends,

I am writing to you this morning in my capacity as chair of the Archbishop's COVID-19 Task Force. As you all know, we are in a serious situation in this province in terms of the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases.

The Provincial Government has already asked us to make certain sacrifices and is requiring certain businesses to close. Places of Worship have **not** been asked to close, but they have been asked to reduce their attendance to 1/3 of the regular capacity. While this is good news, the Task Force believes that the gospel imperative to love our neighbor as ourselves means that we need to make a different decision regarding the worship life of the Diocese of Calgary.

Our recommendation to the Archbishop is that **all** in person worship services and related parish events be suspended as of Sunday, November 15, 2020. This means that **all** in-person worship on November 15 and subsequent weeks must be cancelled until further notice. The Archbishop concurs with this recommendation.

We realize this is disappointing news. But we also trust that every parish will find a way to provide online services (as we did at the beginning of the pandemic in March) and explore creative ways to connect and reach out to friends and parishioners—provided, of course, that these creative ways conform to AHS and Diocesan guidelines.

Our Task Force's belief is that a "circuit breaker" approach (that is to say, a two week hard shut down) is not sufficient as the incubation of COVID-19 is generally accepted to be two weeks. This means what we will see in terms of cases in two weeks' time from this letter really reflects what is happening *today*. So we are electing to review the situation on a monthly basis. In order to inform this monthly review, the Task Force will also be monitoring cases and numbers on a weekly basis.

Four weeks from now we will be in the middle of Advent. We don't know what Christmas celebrations will be like. Parishes are encouraged to think about—and plan for—services based on the guidelines that have been in force since September.

Be assured that the Archbishop and I have every faith in the people of the Diocese of Calgary to steel themselves for the days and weeks ahead, to meet this current challenge with faith and determination, and to put into action what we profess week by week.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. And thank you for your understanding and cooperation. With God's grace we will all see brighter days.

Faithfully yours,

Leighton