



January 13th, 2021

To the Beloved in Christ in the Parish of the Valley,

Grace and peace to you as we mark the Season of Epiphany.

We are writing to you at this time to assure you of your clergy team's prayers as we enter into what is now a second declared state of emergency in the Province of Ontario. So many people across the communities in our province are being impacted right now due to COVID-19. Thousands of people are physically suffering in our hospitals and their intensive care units due to this awful illness. More than five thousand people have now died across Ontario, and more than seventeen thousand have died across Canada. Thousands more of us are dealing with what seems to be a never-ending river of emotional suffering brought on by feelings of grief, stress, isolation, overwork and significant economic hardship, all of which COVID-19 continues to unrelentingly leave in its wake.

If you are personally struggling right now in any of these ways, or others, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, please know that we your clergy team are praying for you. We are also praying for our health care professionals, researchers, front line workers, and elected officials as we all work together under God's loving care to try to bring this pandemic to an end. If it would be meaningful for you at any time to pray with a member of the clergy team one on one, for yourself or for anyone else, please reach out to us by telephone using the numbers below. We would be honoured to join our prayers with yours in the strictest confidence. We also humbly ask that you please continue to pray for us as we work as a team to offer pastoral care and leadership to our parish family at this time.

Because of the new provincial stay-at-home order that comes into effect tomorrow, as a parish we will be reverting to our previous Zoom method of recording Sunday services. As in the spring, the clergy team and lay leaders will be remotely recording a service of Morning Prayer from our homes this week and in the weeks that follow. This service will be shared with the parish through our website and YouTube channel on Sunday morning. Please watch for an email on Sunday morning containing the video link. This weekly service will also continue to air on Sundays at 10am on YourTV Ottawa Valley.

We would also like to remind everyone across the parish that for the duration of the stay-at-home order our church sanctuaries, church halls and offices are closed for all purposes. Please do not enter our church buildings for any reason at this time. Small maintenance projects, cleaning, tending to plants and other well-intentioned efforts can all wait until after the stay-at-home order is lifted. Essential tasks (such as checking on heating systems, security, processing mail and making bank deposits, etc.) will be coordinated by the churchwardens, treasurers, clergy team and staff. Should you have any questions or concerns please speak with your local churchwardens.

Dear friends, during this Season of Epiphany the teachings of Jesus remain our guiding light. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14: 27). Please stay safe, stay at home whenever possible, and take good care.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

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The Reverend Matthew Brown
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