

Dear Members of Church of the Ascension,

We regret to inform you that public worship services at all Anglican churches in Ontario, including Church of the Ascension, have been suspended starting this Sunday, March 15, due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. This decision was made jointly by the bishops of all the dioceses in Ontario, including Bishop Todd Townshend of the Diocese of Huron. The Executive Team of Ascension concurs with this decision.

The bishops will review their decision on Wednesday, April 8, and decide whether to end, extend or modify the suspension.

Ascension's Executive Team has made several arrangements and additional decisions related to this, which are listed below:

Online Worship

We are pleased that Ascension will be able to conduct a simple worship service online starting this Sunday, March 15, at 10 a.m. This will require only Rev. Canon June Hough and a minimal number of lay people, who have already been assigned. No others will be permitted in the church building at that time.

You will be able to find this online service at either:

- **Ascension's new YouTube channel:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_tB27TSdIE3lerNvZwvMvQ or search "Church of the Ascension London Canada". Please click the red "Subscribe" button to be notified of future postings.
- **Ascension's Facebook Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/102383728728/> or search "Church of the Ascension (Anglican) London ON".

It is our hope that this service will be available live, but given this is the first time we have tried it, the posting online may be delayed until after the service is over.

Community Breakfast

The Community Breakfast is still on for Tuesday, March 17. Bishop Todd considers outreach to be an "essential program". He has checked with the Middlesex-London Health Unit on our behalf and has been told it can be held as long as we are strict about hygiene precautions such as gloves, hand washing, cleaning of surfaces, etc. The volunteers who have committed to work at this breakfast will need to show up at their assigned times.

The ReTag clothing depot will also run at this time.

Church Groups

All mid-week church activities as well as Sunday choir practice are cancelled. This includes the Parish Council meeting on March 26.

Pastoral Care

Rev. June is available for pastoral emergencies and other care needs. As always, she can be reached at 226-448-3790 or junehough@rogers.com.

If you are finding yourself to be mentally affected by the social distancing, you can contact Rev. June for support. Please note that the bishops' decision is not a call for everyone to self-isolate. It is a move to cut back on large gatherings to reduce the opportunity for the virus to spread quickly and widely. The risk of contracting COVID-19 here is still low. It is reasonably, if not absolutely, safe to have a visit between friends.

The Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) will continue their regular assignments.

If you are ordered to self-isolate due to contracting COVID-19, your church will not abandon you. Contact Rev. June and she can arrange for support for you through church members, such as delivery of supplies (although apparently not toilet paper at this time).

Church Office

The church office will remain open at its usual times, Tuesday to Thursday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Fundraising Events

It is too early for the Executive Team (with organizers) to make a decision about the two upcoming fundraisers, the Quarter Auction on April 23 and Alex Baerg's concert on May 9.

Church Finances

While many activities are shut down at the church, there will be few financial savings in the short term, other than a bit on the utility bills. Your donations continue to matter to provide for the mission and ministry of the church and diocese and the associated staff and building costs of that work. Donations make up 85% of Ascension's revenue. About one-third of Ascension donors have set up pre-authorized withdrawals and those will continue through the suspension. We respectfully ask others to find ways to continue their regular donations to the church. Options include:

- **Mail:** Put a cheque with your collection envelope in an outer envelope and mail it to:

Church of the Ascension
2060 Dundas St.
London, ON, N5V 1R2

- **Interac Transfer:** If you bank online, you can make an Interac transfer to the church by directing it to office@ascensionlondon.com. If a message space is available, include your collection envelope number.
- **Pick up:** If you would like someone to pick up your collection envelope, contact our treasurer, Bill McKinstry, at 226-224-0222 or mck728@mac.com.

Future News

We will keep you up to date by a variety of means. Those online can check our website at ascensionlondon.com or the church Facebook group and watch for emails from the church office. Those for whom the church does not have an email address would get a phone call.

What You Can Do

Contact Rev. June and offer to be a support for anyone who asks for help while they are sick with COVID-19. This may involve running errands such as grocery shopping for them while they are required to self-isolate or checking in with them regularly by phone.

Contact Bill McKinstry and offer to help pick up collection envelopes.

Above all, pray. Consider the Prayer for the Pandemic:

May we who are merely inconvenienced
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home
remember those who must choose between preserving their health and making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips
remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market
remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,
let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours. Amen.

Sincerely,
Your Executive Team
Rev. Canon June Hough
Church Wardens Mary Grant and Russ Braley
Deputy Church Wardens Sandra Coulson and Steve Holmes
Treasurer Bill McKinstry