

The Territory of the People Anglican Church

The Right Reverend Barbara Andrews
Bishop Suffragan to the Metropolitan

360 Nicola Street
Kamloops BC V2C 2P5

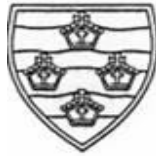
Ph: (778) 471- 5573

Fax: (778) 471-5586

Email: office@territory.anglican.ca

territory.anglican.ca

Email: bishop@territory.anglican.ca



Canon Dwight Oatway
Finance Officer

360 Nicola Street
Kamloops, BC V2C 2P5

Ph: (778) 471-5573

Fax: (778) 471-5586

Email: finance@territory.anglican.ca

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Dear Friends:

With news of the growing numbers of those affected with COVID 19 in the Central Interior and around BC, the Territory is committed to taking every precautionary measure possible to aid in stopping the spread of this virus. We are following the health department updates closely and continue to encourage you to do the same and to follow their directions for us. Stay home, wash your hands, practice social distancing and self-isolation, above all be safe and remain healthy.

Effective immediately, I am directing that **all our buildings be closed**, all **public worship be suspended** (both Sunday and mid-week), and all **in-person parish activities be suspended** indefinitely.

Of special consideration are the ministries that provide support for those in our communities who we **provide food to, mental health support groups and addiction groups**. I am encouraging the leadership of each parish and parish group that provides space or programming, to be in touch with the leadership of user groups and/or other social service groups in the area, to determine the best way to meet the needs elsewhere while our buildings are closed. These are difficult decisions to make but ones I believe we need to make to protect the vulnerable in our communities, both those we serve and those who provide the ministry. Each of us must do our part to ensure all are safe and we are not spreading COVID 19 to others.

Pastoral Care will continue for all in our communities and I am encouraging all clergy and lay leaders to find new ways of communicating with each member within our parishes. Phone, email, FaceTime, video conferencing, notes, and all the other ways we stay in touch with our family, friends, and neighbours will become the new normal now. I am encouraging all those who give leadership to prayer ministries, prayer shawl ministries, and companion programs to be in touch with the clergy and together set up ways we can continue to pray for the special needs of our communities. For those with the ability to offer public worship through social media, let your community know when you will be on line offering worship. Or send out a list of other opportunities of those who are offering this ministry across the country. We are one body with many parts, all are necessary to ensure God's comforting peace is available to all.

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Funerals are an essential component of our ministry that needs special consideration as we want to continue to offer support and comfort to those who mourn. I would continue to encourage families to be in touch with the clergy to determine the best ways we can support them in a time when gatherings must be limited to small groups, and the difficulties now for family members to travel to gather together. Funeral Homes will have protocols in place to help families and clergy make the best decision in each case.

Weddings are another consideration, and I am encouraging the clergy to respond to each individual request with special care. If it is necessary to go forward with a planned wedding, it will be done in a limited way with only the priest, the couple and two witnesses present. All other requests should be encouraged to look for dates later in the year.

Parish Offices - we recommend should be closed to care for our parish staff. If the staff persons cannot work from home, then parish staff need to sanitize the work space and engage in all practices to safeguard health. I am encouraging the Wardens and Incumbents to review with the staff a plan to support them and keep them safe going forward.

Financial matters will be a challenge for the whole church now during this difficult time. I am directing the Finance committees, wardens and treasurers to do a review of how the closure might affect them and asking them to be in touch with me so we can together find ways to support one another over the next few months. At every level of the church, funds will be needed to maintain the staff, ministries and building and it will be helpful to know what we need to prepare for going forward.

The **Territory Office** will be closed to the public now, and the staff will be working remotely. Clergy and Territory staff will continue to be paid as they continue to work just in different ways. We will continue to deal with mail, and frequently check the phone for messages and emails remotely. The Administration Committee will meet next week to review our finances and look for ways to ensure we have the funds to continue our support of all the ministries within the Territory.

As we move towards **Holy Week and Easter Day**, I will be working with the clergy and lay leaders to develop a way for us to worship and celebrate this Holy Time. Information about this will go out as soon as possible. We will continue to post resources on the Territory Website at <https://www.territoryofthepeople.ca/>

We will eventually collect all COVID-19 items at a single location for but now check under NEWS <https://www.territoryofthepeople.ca/news> also a BLOG at <https://www.territoryofthepeople.ca/blog/thoughts-and-prayers> I encourage you to find your way to it and to submit your offerings to deanspc@shaw.ca so that all can read. Let's share with one another the ways in which we are finding to support and encourage one another in this unusual time.

Bishop Elect Lincoln and I continue to hold each of you in prayer and give thanks to God for the incredible way you have enacted the directives coming from this office, supported each other and have cared for all of God's beloved people in your communities.

I will remain available to you through my email bishop@territory.anglican.ca or my cell phone 250-819-2821.

Blessings, +*Barbara*