



Office of the Archbishop
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To: The Clergy and Parishes of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Date: March 18th, 2020

Dear Friends,

Following the advice of both Federal and Provincial Health Officials for people to stay home if at all possible, **the Synod Office will close as of 5:00p.m. today (March 18 2020)**. Synod Office Staff will continue working but will do so from home. It is a peculiarity of our office phone system that we cannot retrieve voice messages remotely, however all staff will continue to have access to their email. Response time may be slowed. We will continue to provide what services we can. This will include payroll. We are currently planning for this closure to last until April 3. A decision regarding extending the office closure will be made on or before April 3 2020.

VSSTs and Task Groups may still meet. However all such meetings will be by electronic means. People wishing to use the Diocesan "Zoom" account must book their meeting time through Jan Connors: jconnors@nspeidiocese.ca

Allotment: Yesterday the Parish Relations Task Group agreed to waive the March Allotment payment for all parishes. To be perfectly clear, the decision is that Allotment for March is waived. If you've already paid it there will be a credit for it. If you haven't paid it there is no need to pay it. If you haven't paid February that is still due. Parishes are still responsible for all salary and salary related costs.

Pre Authorised Remittances (PAR): The diocese offers an opportunity for parishioners to make financial offerings to their parish directly from their bank account. If you want more information on this process and how to sign up for it, please contact Tammy Cummins. tcummins@nspeidiocese.ca

Parish Annual Returns: All parishes are normally required to submit their annual returns to the Synod Office by March 31. At this time, we are extending that deadline to April 30. If your parish annual meeting elected new lay and youth delegates to Synod: **the "Certificate of Election" must be forwarded to the Synod Office as soon as possible.**

Insurance Questions: Parish officers with insurance questions should follow the usual process. Our Diocesan Insurance Advisor is available by phone and email. Our insurance plan does not provide business interruption insurance for this eventuality.

More About Funerals: Yesterday the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Prince Edward Island advised that there should not be more than 20 persons present at a funeral. The different Funeral Homes are developing their own protocols; please check their websites for additional information.

I will attempt to keep you updated on a regular basis. We will circulate special notices using the "Net News" mailing list. These communications will also be posted on the COVID 19 section of the Diocesan Webpage. If communications need to take place outside of normal working hours, they will be posted initially on the Diocesan Facebook page. You do not need to have a Facebook account to check our page- it is open to the public. The page is entitled - Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

(<https://www.facebook.com/Diocese-of-Nova-Scotia-and-Prince-Edward-Island-274107035933762/>)

Please continue to maintain contact with those who are extra vulnerable at this time and those for whom enforced social distancing has raised anxiety. Contact may be maintained through phone calls or using email or social media. We are the body of Christ even though at this moment we cannot gather. I would like to assure you of my prayers and thanksgivings for the ways in which the church of God is putting faith into action and showing our love for our neighbor.



The Most Reverend Ron Cutler
Archbishop of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island