

March 28th, 2020 - Archbishop Cutler

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

Dear Friends;

The Diocesan Council met last evening by electronic means. We gathered to consider how we might further respond to the unanticipated financial needs of parishes due to the restrictions placed on gatherings. We recognize that this has not only affected monetary offerings from parishioners but also the ability for fundraising and the rental income which many parishes receive. Parishes which rely on investment income will also find this revenue affected. We are also aware that there are large numbers of people who have been laid off in our provinces. Entire segments of the economy are facing devastation as together we try to control the pandemic threat. Though our buildings are closed, the church is still open! We are still leading people in worship although in a scattered rather than a gathered way. We are also encountering increased needs in our wider communities for spiritual and mental health support. This time of crisis requires us to maintain and strengthen our ability to minister in the midst of heightened anxiety.

We are fortunate in that we have had several years of budgetary 'surpluses' which has provided a pool of unrestricted working capital for us to draw on. Most of this money has come from the tremendous support of parishes to the request for diocesan allotment. The Financial Management and Development Team met earlier this week and prepared some options for the Council to consider for how we might use this resource to provide relief and encouragement to parishes.

The Council passed the following three resolutions:

1. To waive allotment payments by Parishes for April and May 2020.
2. To pay the salaries of all Stipendiary Clergy from April 1st, 2020 to the end of May 2020, provided that, those parishes having \$500,000 or more in investments (whether in the Diocesan Consolidated Trust or held elsewhere) shall be obliged to repay the Diocese the amounts paid on their behalf, by no later than 18 months after FMD VSST has determined which parishes are subject to repayment.
3. The management team and two members of Diocesan Council appointed by Diocesan Council are authorized to make decisions with regard to requests from Parishes whose needs are not addressed in Resolutions (1) and (2) above. This authority ends on September 1st, 2020 or at such other date, as may be determined by Diocesan Council.

Council subsequently elected the Rev. Carl Fraser and Ms. Tanya Moxley to fill the requirements of resolution 3.

These resolutions build on the previously announced waiver of allotment payments for March 2020.

We do not know what challenges lie ahead of us in the next months. Our governments, both national and provincial, continue to respond to the needs of Canadians. Some of the

promised assistance might apply to community and nonprofit organizations and may support our work. Details of the government support will be clarified in the coming days. In the meantime we pray that these decisions will remove some of the concern of parish leaders. We encourage parishes to explore the stewardship resources found in the Covid-19 section of the diocesan website.

“God give us faith to go forward with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us.” (Eric Milner-White)

The Most Reverend Ron Cutler

Archbishop of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island