



Pastoral Letter from the Archbishop of Keewatin

To be read in all congregations November 1 and 8. This letter is to also be posted on the church door as well as other appropriately prominent places in the church building.

As the people of God we are called to meet together regularly in community to worship our Creator, celebrate the sacraments of Christ, and strengthen each other in the Spirit through fellowship. The clergy, in particular, are called to provide a ministry of presence regardless of the circumstances. At the same time, we conduct our common life and exercise our ministry within the context of the situations in which we find ourselves.

Therefore, given the arrival of the second wave of H1N1 influenza throughout our diocese, I am issuing the following directives:

1. Special attention must be given to hand washing and the use of sanitizers in preparing for and administering communion and other sacramental acts as well as ensuring the regular cleansing of potentially germ-laden surfaces such as door knobs and railings
2. The practice of intinction (dipping the bread into the cup) is not allowed. In the Anglican tradition, it is considered appropriate to receive communion in one kind only if circumstances require. Therefore, if any choose to receive only the bread at this time, that choice is to be affirmed.
3. Restraint must be exercised when sharing the peace at the Eucharist to keep physical contact to a reasonable level. During the pandemic, worshippers are asked to refrain from physical greetings such as hand shakes or hugging, replacing them with appropriate verbal greetings.
4. While for the most part, the clergy will continue the practice of shaking hands with parishioners at the end of the service, it must be clearly understood that many members of the congregation may choose not to participate and that choice is also to be affirmed.
5. When administering home communion, caution must be exercised with regard to health concerns
6. In communities where the authorities have requested there be no public meetings, consultation with the appropriate authorities must be undertaken before conducting a service. If a regular worship service is cancelled, steps should be taken where possible to broadcast a service through available means such as local radio at the time the service would have happened
7. Families are being encouraged to maintain their practice of saying morning and evening prayers in their homes.
8. Getting vaccinated is important not only for our own protection but also for the protection of others. All members of the church are encouraged to set an example for the rest of the community by receiving the H1N1 vaccination as soon as possible.
9. Any one who has questions or concerns about these matters should contact the Synod Office or one of the archdeacons.

With prayers for God's continued blessing upon your witness and ministry during these difficult days, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop