



ANGLICAN DIOCESSE MONTREAL

The Right Reverend Mary Irwin-Gibson
Bishop of Montreal
bishops.office@montreal.anglican.ca

Season of Pentecost

June 4, 2020

Dear Colleagues and friends in Christ,

Greetings and love to you all in Christ Jesus who has not left us as orphans but who is with us always to the end of time! I pray that you are well and that you are holding up under the pressure of reinventing and adapting to ministry in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are all finding this a challenging and unsettling experience as our society struggles to respond appropriately in the midst of political and economic and social pressures. Some of you have been carrying extra heavy loads pastorally as you support people who are sick with the virus or who are working in situations where they are exposed and in regular danger. Others of you live with the worries of employment, income, health and family concerns. All of us are affected with a fatigue from three months of disruption and extra efforts.

It is important that clergy plan to take a **vacation** this summer. I would ask you to co-ordinate with your Archdeacon and Deanery colleagues so that pastoral care and worship services can be covered. Many of you have been worshipping together across parish boundaries and have been enriched and encouraged by it. Taking time off for rest and refreshment is an important part of your health and your ability to be the leader God has called you to be.

Diocesan Synod, which was scheduled for this month, has been postponed until November 14th and it will be held online. More information about this will be made available over the summer.

Our Primate has asked us to keep track of some extra **statistics** for the month of June and I attach her letter and a document from Canon Neil Elliot on the information needed. Please assist us in this matter and **email us the results**. Please also make sure that you are making a notation in your vestry books about the services that you are holding, the number of attendees and a note that it was a virtual service via whatever platform you are using (Zoom, YouTube, FaceBook, GoToMeeting, teleconference, etc.).

It seems clear that we will not be returning to our church buildings before autumn at the earliest and that even when we are able to gather together, there will be people who continue to prefer to worship with us online. Before we open our doors for worship, we will need government approval and there will be many preparations to be made to meet public health requirements. We are preparing some documents for you and will send them out when we are clear on what will be required and after they have been seen by Diocesan Council. We plan to consult an epidemiologist and to use the best

guidance that we can access. I am sharing a scenario written by Pastor Erik Parker of the ELCIC Synod of Alberta and the Territories which I found interesting to reflect on and to give you an idea of some of the things that will be required or suggested.

The Departed: Please join me in giving thanks for the lives and ministries of two of our retired clergy.

The Rev. Canon Don Meloche died peacefully on Sunday morning, May 31st. Don served for many years as Chaplain of the Montreal Children's Hospital and he was well known and loved at St. Stephen's, Lachine and St. Andrew's and St. Mark's (now All Saints By the Lake), Dorval. Please keep his wife Janet and their family in your prayers. Rest eternal grant unto Don, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine on him. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

The Ven John Lee - died on April 21st. John came to Montreal in 1969 to serve as Program Director in the Diocese of Montreal until the early 70s. Most of his ministry was non-parochial, including prison chaplaincy and running a detox center. John especially had a heart for francophone ministry, for the poor and for justice. He last served in Stanbridge East as Archdeacon of Bedford. Rest eternal grant unto John, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine on him. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

Funerals:

No funeral services may be held in church buildings at this time. Where cremation is not an option and a burial cannot be delayed, a brief graveside service may take place in the presence of a presider and no more than 10 other people, each respecting the two-meter personal distance recommended by health authorities. Even though funeral homes remain in operation, because of the high risk of transmission, clergy and lay readers of the diocese may not preside at funerals in funeral homes.

Weddings:

If a wedding has not been postponed, it may be held in the church, in the presence of the couple, two witnesses and the officiant, each maintaining the physical distances indicated by the public health authorities. One of the witnesses could record the ceremony for the benefit of those unable to attend in person. According to current public health regulations, a wedding outdoors could be held with a maximum of 10 people, physically distanced. The Clergy Handbook on page 61 describes the requirements if you wish to hold a wedding outdoors. As Archbishop Hutchison used to say, "It has to be a **chapel** experience."

Baptisms:

No baptisms are to be held in the church at this time. In case of emergency any Christian can baptize the individual and a celebration and recognition can take place at church *at a later date. The BAS, page 164 explains the details.

Clergy transitions and appointments:

The Rev. Jim McDermott and his wife Veronica are moving to Calgary in July, to live next door to their grandchildren. Jim came to Montreal in 2005 and has served in many parishes, most recently at St. Mark's, St. Laurent before it merged with St. Peter's. Both he and Veronica have been involved at Christ Church Cathedral. We send them with our blessings and thanks for their ministries.

The Rev. Tapiwa Gusha has been appointed as interim priest in charge at St. Lawrence, LaSalle. Tapiwa and his wife Jean and their three children arrived in Montreal from Zimbabwe in December.

I want to encourage you to join Clergy Connect with Neil Mancor – Fridays at 10am. You can find the Zoom link on the Diocesan [Congregational Development web site](#) and also Neil's Facebook [page](#). You will find a forum for discussing many of the issues we are facing, including a place to test out ideas. Neil is available to help with any stewardship issues you wish to address. He continues to lead Revive courses and is a resource for Alpha and Messy Church. Lee-Ann Matthews is available to help you with Facebook and website suggestions.

Ordinations: I had originally hoped to hold ordinations of priests and deacons on May 24th at the Cathedral. It is still my intention to ordain a number of candidates and I will publish my intention to do so in the near future.

Please remember to write to me at bishops.office@montreal.anglican.ca, and not my gmail address. I rely on Maria Abate, in complete confidence, to help manage emails and schedule appointments.

The staff continue to work principally from home and are always available by email. We go in to our offices in Synod Office as needed but all of our meetings are by Zoom or by telephone.

Wage Subsidy

Further to my letter of May 1st, the Government of Canada has extended the wage subsidy until the end of August. Diocesan Council had approved a relief of clergy stipends for one month, which with the subsidy from the government allowed us to pay for clergy stipends from April 1st to June 14th. As of June 15th the Diocese will continue to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (75% of salary) on behalf of the parishes and will invoice the remaining 25% directly to the parish.

Copyright

As we many of us have been streaming and posting our services of worship, it is important to be sensitive to copyright issues for both liturgical texts and music. The Communications staff of the Anglican Church of Canada has created a simple instruction about copyright issues relating to use of liturgical texts and music for reprint and for streaming/performance which can be found on-line at: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/ACC-Copyright-Considerations.pdf>

Once again, let me say how much I appreciate the hard work that you are putting in – while almost all of you must work from home. I have enjoyed joining some of you and your people in online worship but it is a whole new experience and many of you have had a steep learning curve. Well done!

Please do remember to take time for yourselves for rest and refreshment. And keep in touch.

Grace and peace,

+ Mary