



The Diocese of Rupert's Land

The Right Reverend Geoffrey Woodcroft
Bishop of Rupert's Land

Bishop's Directive – March 12, 2020 **re. COVID-19 Pandemic**

"What is the Coronavirus?" Watch a five-minute [video](#) by Dr. Peter Lin about the cause of the virus and its prevention.

Although the risk of infection is low at this time, the Diocese of Rupert's Land has issued new guidelines for public worship, in order to stay 'on the safe side.'

I am asking Clergy and licensed lay administrators to:

- Have people exchange the Peace without physical contact e.g. with a bow and hands together; the touching of one's heart and mouthing the peace; using a sign language approach of linked fingers in two circles followed by a sharing movement. Parishes could consider learning about such ways of communicating the peace without the need to touch
- Let people know that to receive communion in one kind (bread only) is to receive the full nature of Christ. Theologically and doctrinally this is acceptable, and especially in extraordinary times.
- **Suspend the use of the common cup.** Consecrate a few drops of wine in a chalice and place it on the Altar so all may see during the sharing of Communion. It will be consumed by the presider **or** her/his designate before ablutions are performed. This suspension is also in force for residential and hospital Communions.
- NOT use clay or earthen communion ware. Only silver(ed) or gold communion ware shall be used.
- NOT use fruit juice for Eucharistic celebrations
- Place the wafer into the palm of the communicant's hand. (Wafers shall NOT be placed directly into the mouth.)
- **Suspend the use of anointing and laying on of hands.** In the event of the need for last rites, where there is no diagnosis or quarantine of COVID-19, those licensed for this ministry may, at their discretion, offer the laying on of hands and anointing with oil.
- Share smiles and friendly conversation at the door instead of handshakes or hugs.
- Provide hand-sanitizer (60% alcohol content) at the entrance of the church building and at the front of the Nave and in the Sanctuary for people to use before sharing communion. (This may take some doing as many stores have run out of sanitizer.)
- **Post this Bishop's Directive in easy-to-read locations of the worship space.**

I am asking clergy and appointed lay leaders to ensure all pastoral visitors adhere to these same guidelines, especially those who are licensed to offer residence and hospital Communion. Parishioners and clergy who are sick should stay home.

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I am reminding parishes of general public worship guidelines, which should always be in effect:

General Public Worship Guidelines:

- Hand sanitizers should be available at strategic locations and particularly at entrances of the Church buildings. Parishioners should be encouraged to use them before attending worship or other activities.
- All persons involved in the administering or handling of bread and wine, and their associated chalices, cruets, patens and ciborium, must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the elements and the setting of the table.
- Review appropriate etiquette and proper methods for wiping the vessels between communicants with all chalice bearers. **Use of wine is presently suspended.**
- Fresh purificators need to be used for each service and for each communion cup. The purificator should be shaken out and repositioned so that a fresh spot is used each time it is used to wipe the common cup. **Use of wine is presently suspended.**
- All communion vessels must be washed with hot, soapy water, rinsed in hot water and air dried after liturgy and prior to storage.
- It is recommended that communion vessels made of clay, glazed or unglazed, **not** be used at this time.

Ministry and Mission

Maintaining the health of the Body of Christ is to answer God's call to be prepared to proclaim that the kingdom has come near, heal the sick and protect the vulnerable. Let us continue to pray for the world, and especially those whom we serve directly. Let us pray for the many who are now affected by Covid-19. Let us pray for discernment of God's will for Rupert's Land disciples and the ministry and mission each practices.

Let us remain in contact with our most vulnerable members and elders to ensure their safety and wellness. Finally, let us ask God for courage, so that we might fully live out the ministry of our Lord.

From the Primate's letter to the Bishops Mar 11, 2020

I am grateful to Archbishop Melissa Skelton for sharing the prayer resources created in New Westminster - see: <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/covid-19-cant-stop-us-from-praying>

The Primate has also suggested that each parish should make provisions should we be required to suspend worship and use of Church buildings.

Yours in Christ,



Bishop of Rupert's Land

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