



**The Rt. Revd. John Watton, Bishop**  
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**Re: COVID 19 and the Diocesan response.**

**To my Sisters and Brothers, beloved, each of you, in Christ.**

You are aware that I, as most Canadian Bishops and leaders of other faith communities responded quickly with guidelines regarding responses to the COVID 19 pandemic.

I am thankful that people understood that each Episcopal response and directive was part of a process of ongoing consultation and research based on the best clear and rational information available. Every discussion, and consultation I have had has not been through the hype and potential misinformation of Social Media. I have continued, and will continue that process.

At the present time, it is clear that it is essential to heed warnings from public health officers that each country has a very short window in which to flatten the curve of the growth of this epidemic. I have had correspondence from Doctors who have taken the time to express concern to me about an overall lack of urgency in relation physical isolation.

For that reason, I hereby direct that all Church Services and public gatherings in the Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland are to cease as of March 16, 2020. This Pastoral will be assessed prior to April 1 2020. I am rescheduling all ordinations, Confirmations and Episcopal liturgies.

Clergy are expected to be diligent in their duties from home or offices, using every means possible to remain in contact with parishioners, and to be accessible for pastoral concerns. Meetings should be held via electronic methods, or rescheduled.

Funerals, may be held and palliative requests met; it is expected that such gatherings will be small, and limited to close friends and family only, and that clergy will follow practices that will ensure safety for themselves and others.

It is my belief and conviction that in this time of uncertainty, the witness of concern, action, faith, love and unity of our beloved Church will be of great benefit to the communities we are called to serve.

Let us work together in prayer and love, trusting that our Lord indeed supplies all we need for every change and challenge.

+John: Central Newfoundland

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