



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning I was delighted to see how some of our clergy and laity have been inspired for ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their stories are posted on the diocese's website and I encourage you to read them – and to send in your own moments of inspiration. They are truly uplifting and capture some of the creativity, love and kindness that so many of us are experiencing these days.

I'd like to draw your attention to some important initiatives that are happening in our Diocese this week.

As you're already aware, your area bishops and I are inviting the Diocese to a day of prayer and fasting this Thursday, March 26. Resources for the day have been [posted on the diocesan website](#). Choose from among the suggested prayers for morning, noon and evening, or say your own as you join with Anglicans from all corners of our Diocese, each in our own place. You'll also find guidelines for intentional fasting in a safe and prayerful way, if you choose to do so. Let us pray as one and turn our hearts to God during this difficult time.

As I mentioned in my last letter, our Executive Director, Robert Saffrey, has circulated a financial worksheet to gather information from parishes. We are grateful for the care and constructive input being offered by each parish sharing financial forecasts. Thank you! With your input and suggestions coming in today, Rob will be providing the College of Bishops with a financial update. A proposal for a way forward will be brought to Diocesan Council on Thursday, March 26. We trust that the decisions we make at Council will offer needed financial relief and encourage a renewed sense of confidence. I will keep you updated on this.

To ensure that our clergy are well informed on financial and human resources matters during the pandemic, we're exploring the possibility of holding meetings on Zoom, so that everyone can ask questions and get the answers that they're seeking. Some clergy have already begun to do this and I am grateful for their participation. All clergy will be notified of these meetings as they are finalized.

Many parish leaders have been in touch with our Director of Stewardship Development, Peter Misiaszek, about promoting Pre-Authorized Remittance during this time of social distancing and the suspension of corporate worship. Please see Peter's information about Pre-Authorized Remittance and other ways to give during this time on the [diocesan website](#).

While I have been thrilled by the efforts of our churches to provide worship services online, I'd like to remind everyone that our buildings should be closed to our parishioners and to the public. All corporate worship and other in-person gatherings should be cancelled. (Ministries of service to marginalized and disadvantaged communities may continue using the utmost care, acting consistent with the Ministry of Health directives. Please connect with [Angie Hocking](#), or [Elin Goulden](#), for best practices.)

Last week, I joined other faith leaders in a meeting with Toronto Mayor John Tory. He expressed his deep thanks and support for the work that all our churches, temples, mosques and houses of worship are doing to help the most vulnerable members of our society. I look forward to working with him and our ecumenical siblings and interfaith partners in the days ahead, and I will update you on those efforts.

I am grateful for our College of Bishops and our priests and deacons who serve each day in trying times. I am thankful for parish administrators who keep the community in touch, for musicians sharing song to comfort and inspire both from church steps and on-line, and for children's ministry and youth gatherings that gather and engage our young people in virtual ways. Your efforts are a blessing!

Friends, let us continue to pray without ceasing for God's world.

I look forward to writing to you again on Wednesday.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Toronto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil
Bishop of Toronto