

## Update from All Saints'

### Email to the Parish from The Venerable Christopher Dunn

24 March 2020

Today is **Blanche's Birthday**. We celebrated with a drive to drop off bags of fabric to another person who sews, followed by a stop at the Grocery store. It was Blanche's first outing in 8 days. Of course, I was not going to let her cook on her birthday—take out Chinese worked well. Oh, for the little celebrations of life and distractions during a Covid time.

So, let's begin tonight's update with a nice piece of news. On the weekend **Jason Aston and Kerith Gordon** (who attend the 8:00 a.m. service) had a baby girl, Eve. Because I know that everyone wants to know the important details, Eve weighed in at 6 lbs 6 oz, and both she and mom are doing well. Just to put this in context, many of you will know Sylvia Aston; known to many of you as the "Girl Guide Cookie lady."

I have had a few requests for information about how to continue your **financial offerings** in this time while the Church building is shut down:

- If you are on Direct Withdrawal, then it will come out as normal; but let us know if you need to adjust this plan if things get tight for you.
- If you are using envelopes, then you can drop off an envelope at the Church secure mailbox at the Richmond Road door (to the left of the Chapel). You can also mail in the envelope because I am checking the mail regularly and we are making regular deposits at the bank.
- There is also the alternative of using the website connection to Canada Helps <https://www.allsaintswestboro.com/donate-now/> using PayPal or a Credit Card.
- In some cases, people will wait until this is over and we are back together and then they will hopefully catch up.
- We certainly understand the impact that these new arrangements are placing on all of us. We are going along financially and covering things as they come up.

The other news today is that the Bishop has issued another statement in conjunction with the Ontario House of Bishops. **All Services of worship and activities are suspended until further notice.** This includes all the services scheduled through Holy Week and Easter Sunday. His statement goes on to say,

*One of the realities for the Church living through this pandemic is our inability to physically gather as community for worship and mutual support. The Eucharistic Feast which we are used to celebrating week after week has been interrupted. On-line celebrations, prayers, bible studies, and devotions offered by parishes have been keeping us connected in a virtual way and we are grateful for these inspired links. This temporary absence from one another tests our very nature as a living body and reminds us of our deep longing to be together.*

*We find ourselves in a time of Eucharistic Fast rather than Feast. Therefore, the bishops of our province have agreed together that our virtual worship through Holy Week and the season of Easter, or until such time that we can gather in community together, will not include the liturgy of the Eucharist. Sacramental celebrations are the work of the whole People of God and require a gathering of people who can be physically present to one another. That is impossible for most of us at this time. The Great Three Days of Easter, and through the fifty days of the season, we will be fasting from the Eucharist but feasting on the Word. We believe that the Risen One, the Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is present and active with us as we hear and receive him in the word of the scriptures, in that word interpreted and proclaimed in preaching, and in the word inwardly digested, by faith, in each person.*

So, for now and until further notice, we will be continuing to meet in the “virtual world.”

Here is a prayer for this evening from the New Zealand Prayer book:

*God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to all who wait or work in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make them the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. **Amen.***

Sorry for the length of this email, but it was important to cover some of the questions and concerns that I continue to hear about.

All the best as we move forward,

Chris