

The Most Reverend Anne Germond



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

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Dear friends,

In the past week, I have met via teleconference with the Executive Committee of Algoma as well as with Diocesan Leaders and Regional Deans in Moosonee. This week I am meeting via teleconference with clergy, wardens, and treasurers to share information relating to the care of ourselves, each other, and our buildings during this time of pandemic. I am encouraged by the stories I have already heard of parishes reaching out to their members and of the creative ways everyone is staying connected during this time.

We all saw the headlines of the *Anglican Journal* last December which asked the question “Gone by 2040?” In a post this week someone had put a big orange sticky note over that headline and written in thick black marker, “The Church: Transformed by 2021.”

The truth is that we have been forced out of our buildings and are discovering fresh ways of being the church in new and exciting ways. We need a message of hope now more than ever and we are all being transformed by the prayers of the wider church as we gather together in our own small corners.

We will not be back in our buildings any time soon and will soon be posting resources on the diocesan websites which will help you celebrate well at home or in livestream services.

On Monday evening, the Ontario House of Bishops met via Zoom to discuss our diocesan responses to the pandemic. We wish to share the following with you in the hopes that you will join us in fasting from Eucharist and feasting on the Word during this time:

“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 now find ourselves in a time of Eucharistic Fast rather

than Feast. The Reverend Dr. Eileen Scully, Director of Faith, Worship and Ministry puts this time into context in the article attached.

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.”

I remain yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eileen", with a small cross symbol above the first letter.