

Tele Town Hall Meeting on March 24, 2020 at 12:00

Note-takers for ABT Synod information: Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Prema Samuel and Southern Area Dean Rev. Jeff Decelle

Ariella Kimmel (Director of Community Relations – Office of the Premier) – Moderator

Present for the Tele-Townhall Meeting was Dr. Deena Hinshaw (Chief Medical Officer of Health), Premier Jason Kenny, Jason Nixon (Minister of Environment & parks), Tyler Shandro (Minister of Health)

- The team expressed great appreciation for Religious Organizations for being a place of hope and comfort during this time. Requested prayers for those who are dealing with the coronavirus.
- Requested to help ensure resilience of the people in our society. The need for Pastoral/ Spiritual care especially at this time.
- Protocols in place, not to curtail any religious practices but to keep people safe.
- 1/3 economic contraction this quarter. Effects of this will NOT be over in two weeks but may be well into next year. We live in the most difficult times since 1930
- Requested to share reliable information to our congregations. Updated information can be found at www.alberta.ca/covid19
- Follow proper protocols
 - Wash hands as often as possible
 - Keep safe physical distance – 2 meters from another person
 - Stay home if experiencing ANY symptoms, regardless of whether Covid-19 related or otherwise
 - If returned from travel, practice self isolation for 14 days
- How can we help & prepare our congregations?
 - Elderly (70+) with underlying health concerns should stay home with community support for groceries
 - Buddy system for check-in
 - Groceries & Supplies drop off
 - Be cautious of Untrue information
- Protocol for informing the Congregation if someone within the community has tested Positive for Covid-19
 - If the person is symptomatic, Public health will contact the community where this person might have attended the particular event.
 - If the person is asymptomatic or was not in the community/ any event while experiencing symptoms and has followed proper protocols of Quarantine, then it is important to keep their privacy unless they wish to share that information.

- Event during the summer – long range forecasting
 - It would be prudent to hold off plans or to cancel those plans such as camps, summer events and gatherings.
 - There will not be a vaccine available by the summer to make it available and herd immunity is not there yet.
- Mandating closure of Churches and other religious organizations
 - Important to follow protocols – smaller than 50 people; regular handwashing; practice Physical distancing; self isolation if returning from out of province; avoid using shared serving utensils, etc.
 - Not for now.... But there may be time when it will be mandated but for now it is a request.
- \$60M in funding made available to Charitable organizations that are supporting the vulnerable with social need. This funding is not necessarily available for churches and religious organizations except for the civil service they are providing. NO Funding for Religious organizations for operating costs.
- AB govt has made \$1146 available for 2 weeks for those who are in isolation until they qualify for federal assistance. Premier Kenny’s Facebook page will have more information.
- \$5M designated to support Shelters (domestic violence)
- Mental Health
 - Huge toll due anxiety and isolation.
 - An app has been launched that sends daily texts with messages of encouragement and hope. App: COVID19HOPE or text 393939
- Is the province prepared for a situation in Italy with the significant death tolls
 - “we are doing everything we can to avoid such as situation.” Hope that measures are taken to elude similar case.
- Availability of Hand sanitizers and other supplies for Civil Service organization to continue the support in the midst of lack of the same.
 - Provincial Operations Center may be able to provide. Information will be included on the website soon.
- Religious Organizations – Churches, Mosques, Synagogues – Are we considered essential services?
 - PK – List of identified essential services still being compiled
 - DH – Yes, but how they operate (mode of delivery) may need to change.
- Use of Buildings of the religious organizations
 - Appreciated the offer
 - No restrictions at this time for continuing to function as food bank depot, home deliveries, ect
 - Restricted to gathered events such as potlucks, etc
 - People can still come and make use of the buildings for private prayers, etc

- No restrictions for gathering up to 50 people as long as the prescribed protocols are followed including the physical distancing.
- Pastoral Visitations
 - Follow proper prescribed protocols.
 - Pastors are allowed to visit congregants (only that person & no other)
 - Visitors are restrict to limit opportunity of becoming ill.
- Is having small groups / families in churches for communion ok?
 - Virus spreads through droplets and is not airborne.
 - Follow protocols
 - No one who is ill comes (even a mild illness)
 - Hand hygiene is followed.
 - wiping down of surfaces in between each group (door handles, bathrooms)
 - May come a point when people are not encouraged to leave their homes anymore.
- If churches are closed will staff still be able to stream services from within the building?
 - yes, like with schools — students are prohibited from attending but staff can still enter the school.
- What is the right protocol for delivering meals?
 - Follow same protocols as preparation of food.
 - Any cold/flu systems should not leave their homes.
 - Hand washing while food is prepared. No touching your face.
 - Packaging and delivering — scrupulous hand hygiene.
 - Deliver to the door if possible, avoid going in or touching any surface.
 - Regular hand washing before and after dropping food off.
- What would be best practice to mobilize volunteers to assist to check in and help drop off for necessities?
 - Govt to make explicit information, in how to volunteer safely
 - Wellness checks – Symptom check tool: will be made available on their website.
- Activity bags picked up outside the building, ok?
 - Follow proper protocols
 - People who are sick can't prepare them.
 - Regular hand washing.
 - What would go into the bag? Paper, disposable items, or items easily cleaned.
- Travel during Easter
 - DON'T TRAVEL across country or Province
 - Stay close to home
- Funeral Practices
 - Specific Guidelines can be made available.
 - managing the prescribed protocols would be more challenging.

- Do not wear masks unless you are sick.
- Closing
 - Not a flash in the pan. We will not be back to normal in two weeks. Relaxation of social distancing may not happen for 2-3 months, economic consequences much longer.
 - Deepening gravity of the situation
 - Extended nature of it Medically and further Economically,
 - Economic consequences of this pandemic,
 - There is significant value in the Faith communities continuing to provide hope even after the pandemic,
 - our resilience will depend in a large measure in the Spiritual Community – for spiritual support, charity support,
 - Faith Communities are integral to the overall team,
 - Rigorous measure may be coming in the near future,
 - Hope to keep connecting through tele townhall regularly
- Thank you