



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

From the Archbishop

A Pastoral Letter to the Faithful in the Diocese of Algoma

June 17th, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Today Anglicans around Ontario will be receiving the template document attached to this letter, “Loving Our Neighbours”, intended as a ‘guiding document’ to begin the process of re-entering our church buildings for corporate worship following this pandemic period. It is a cautious and measured approach, as promised, as we adjust to the new normal in the midst of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

The template was created as a collaborative effort through numerous conversations between the Ontario House of Bishops, the Executive Officers of each Diocese, and in consultation with Epidemiologists and Chancellors, all of whom have given a great deal of time to this work. Together, we have embraced this template and see it as a faithful work of corporate discernment which has at its heart the theme of loving our neighbours and caring for those who are most vulnerable and susceptible to the virus, while also returning to our sacred spaces for worship and fellowship.

I have always appreciated the collegial working relationships that exist within our Provincial House of Bishops. As we have met weekly over the last three months for mutual support and encouragement and to do the difficult work of leading our dioceses through a period of pandemic, the ties that bind us together have grown stronger.

I commend this high level document to you with the understanding that it will be adapted diocese by diocese depending on each dioceses’ local context. I am grateful to the Ven. Dr. Jay Koyle and the Ven. Kelly Baetz for their willingness to prepare the more detailed document for Algoma over the summer months, with specific guidelines and protocols, as we make our way through the RED, AMBER, and GREEN stages of the re-entry process. Archdeacons Jay and Kelly will be working in consultation with clergy and lay leaders from around Algoma, and with input from other dioceses and denominations who are also undertaking this work.

As of today, Algoma is in the RED STAGE, and God-willing we will enter the AMBER STAGE on September 6th, 2020.

***“Who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10.29)
The one who showed mercy.***

Love of neighbour is a gospel value and is one that I have witnessed being lived out through the “Saints in Algoma” over the last challenging months as the pandemic spread through our nation and the world. Love of neighbour is often a costly, sacrificial love which always places the needs of the other before their own.

I have witnessed ‘love of neighbour’ through the ministry of the ‘Peters and the Pauls’ who have continued to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through online services of worship, the sending out of sermons and prayers, and in ongoing teaching and fellowship.

I have seen it through the loving care of Good Samaritans whose works of mercy included the preparation and delivery of meals to the lonely and isolated, the distribution of food for the poor and homeless, the making of masks for all of their neighbours.

I have seen it in the ‘Marys and Johns’ who stood at the foot of the cross praying for the suffering and with the bereaved, lonely, and sick without being able to offer a consoling hug. Their gospel words of reassurance and hope brought comfort and healing to the weary and worn.

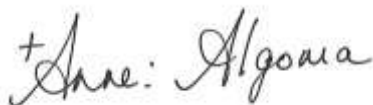
I have seen it in the ‘Barnabases’ whose ministry of encouragement resulted in gifts of money being offered to their parishes, to those who found themselves out of work, and to worldwide organizations caring for those in need. The Book of Acts describes Barnabas as a ‘good man, full of the Holy Spirit, and faith.’ (Acts 11: 24) The Diocese of Algoma is filled with good men and women, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and I am enormously proud to be your bishop.

The Book of Acts also says that, during this time, the ‘hand of the Lord’ was with them all and a great number became believers and turned to faith. Through our internet ministries, new believers have tuned in and prayed with us for the healing of the world.

In the midst of great trials in recent months there have also been moments of great grace.

For all these ministries and for so much more, including your prayers and support for me, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish you all the gift and blessing of a safe and happy summer in the company of those you love.

“Therefore my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.” (1. Cor. 15.58) And may the peace of Christ which passes all understanding remain with you and keep you in love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Anne: Algoma". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

The Most Rev. Anne Germond
Archbishop of Algoma
