



# THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

March 18, 2020

## Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Conseil régional de l'Outaouais et de l'Est Ontarien

*“We pray that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.” - Ephesians 3:14-20*

In the past week, the world health situation has changed drastically, and Ontario's and Quebec's chief medical officers are now recommending that all churches close. Last week churches which were small in number were able to stay open. Things are changing swiftly. And there have been many questions...

Our responsibilities to our Communities of Faith, however, are not less, but now different. We need to keep up and find ways to be creative.

### **WORSHIP and PASTORAL CARE**

If you can broadcast your service, do so. You can use ZOOM, Facebook, a website, and emails to keep in touch do so. Use the phone or snail mail. Please find ways to keep in touch, support each other. Continue to reach out to those in need in safe ways such as delivering groceries to a front step.

- Resources are being suggested to help reach out for meetings, worship and children: <https://go.ringcentral.com/ucc-ringcentral-contact.html>
- Online Sunday worship map: <https://arcg.is/1TaKqS>
- To add an event to this map, please visit: <https://arcg.is/08LCfT>
- GO Project camp: <https://www.facebook.com/TheGoProject1/photos/a.825334094151432/4138068582877950/?type=3&theater>
- Other ideas for children's ministry online <https://ministry-to-children.com/online-ministry-when-church-is-cancelled>
- How to live-stream from the Presbyterian Church of Canada: <https://presbyterian.ca/2020/03/13/introduction-to-live-streaming-for-churches>

Send your creative solutions to Anita so she can choose some to put in the next newsletter. Check Anita's tagged page on COVID-19 for UCC resources for worship.

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

With the cancellation of services, comes also the cancellation of congregational meetings and being able to inform, as per the Manual. If a congregation is able to live stream worship, announcements can be made. However, others are wondering about how to deliver notice of changes, and especially if the meeting was for the purpose of presenting a Call or Appointment, which is time sensitive.

Each congregation's context for sharing a notice of a meeting is a little different. Some have the email addresses for most if not all members so can use that capacity for notice. For others, telephone contact is the best.

The important thing is that the minister/governing body/chair calling the meeting are acting in good faith, and that they choose the option for notifying members that, in their reasonable opinion, is the best way of



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getting in touch with the largest number of people under the circumstances. Quorum requirements would still apply.

It is important for congregations to record in their Minutes how notice of the meeting was given and the rationale for that e.g. "notice of the meeting was given via email to all members for whom we have email addresses, which is 90% of the congregation's membership". That will answer any questions raised later about the legitimacy of the meeting.

Then any decisions that come out of the meeting will be legally solid. In terms of the meeting, again, it depends upon the capacity of the congregation. Zoom meetings are acceptable if there is capacity.

### **FINANCES**

During this time of closure, expenses continue. We are encouraging members to use PAR, Canada Helps, or to send their offering by cheque to the church.

If a congregation defaults on its ADP withdrawal for salaries, because they do not have sufficient funds in the bank, ADP allows one default payment without interrupting employees pay, but if the situation continues beyond that, other resources will have to be used; perhaps from reserves or manse funds.

### **LAY EMPLOYEES**

All employees are valued by the community of faith. Lay employees, particular part time staff, may feel different stresses than ministry personnel such as will they keep getting paid if they go into self-isolation?

All employees can call EFAP for some assistance and directions on a way forward. The Ministry and Personnel Committee could also call the Pastoral Relations Minister for help with a management consultation.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Updated information will be available shortly...

At this point, new questions arise daily, for which answers will have to be found. We may not have them quickly, so please ask, and let the staff team offer its best services to help us all weather this storm.

We will keep in touch,

Rev. Rosemary Lambie, Executive Minister  
Bronwen Harman, President  
Rev. Don Stiles, Past-President  
Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro, President-Elect