



## **An Open Letter to Readers of *The Eganville Leader***

March 17, 2020

Dear Friends,

Along with so many of our institutions and businesses, the Churches are advised to close the doors of our buildings while the COVID-19 crisis develops. However, our buildings are just gathering places for Christians. We, the Body of Christ, are more than just the buildings in which we meet. We are witnesses to Jesus in many different ways that reach well beyond our buildings.

The Anglican Bishop of Ottawa, The Right Reverend John Chapman, has reminded us that “we are a people of the Light! It is incumbent upon us to allow that Light, the Light of Jesus, to shine brightly in the communities in which we live, work, and witness. Gathering in Church buildings is not what makes us Christians. Rather, it is what we see, what we do, and how we speak that makes us followers of Jesus.”

And so, in this challenging time when we are advised to practice social distancing and self-isolation, the churches are encouraged to think of our neighbours. To reach out via phone, or online to connect with the elderly, or lonely, or those in need, and to respond accordingly. Can we shop for or pick up medication for those unable to get out? As communities of Faith we are encouraged to pray, to find creative ways that we can use technology to reach out and offer comfort and support. For the period that Sunday Services are suspended, and to help us stay connected, some Churches are producing on-line worship and prayer services. Contact your Church to find out ways that you can stay connected, and if you have a need.

The Church buildings throughout the community may be closed but we are not “out of business”. As Bishop John reminds us, “In these times, all the baptised are called to service and to prayer.”

May God bless us all as we respond together to the challenges of this pandemic.

On behalf of the Eganville and Area Ministerial,

Your sister in Christ,

The Rev. Canon Susan Clifford  
Associate Incumbent, Parish of the Valley  
Anglican Church of Canada