



# Burton Avenue United Church



Andrea Wheaton, DLM  
*Minister of Word, Sacrament & Pastoral Care*

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March 12, 2020

## **COMPASSION, PREVENTION, PRAYER**

The United Church of Canada's statement on COVID-19 urges communities of faith to respond to COVID-19 with compassion, prevention, and prayer. At our Church Board meeting on Wed., Mar. 11, Board Committees and then the Executive, took time to discuss how we at Burton Ave. United Church might take steps that are compassionate, preventative and prayerful as we respond to the global pandemic.

The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) stated that they have declared it a pandemic to ensure that all countries are taking serious steps to control the spread of the virus. One of the first steps in the strategy of the W.H.O to control the spread of the virus is asking that we prepare and be ready.

So in preparing and being ready, all Church Board members have received The United Church of Canada Emergency Plan provided to "help communities of faith plan ahead for contingencies that may or may not arise, realizing that planning ahead is a way to reduce anxiety". There is a section in the Emergency Plan that is specifically for us in the local community of faith. All Board members are asked to review and to consider which of our current practices/events/gatherings should be reviewed and what suggestions could be followed so that we can help with the prevention of transmission of COVID-19. All church groups and users are encouraged to frequently disinfect touched objects and surfaces, such as tabletops, toys and door handles. Also assess your serving of food and beverages.

The Board decided that for now we will not be shaking hands or giving hugs as a greeting before or after worship. We will be there with a warm hello and a bright smile. We are not cancelling any planned events at this point. However, we do encourage you to stay home if you show or feel any symptoms of illness. Be sure to phone or email to let us know of your planned absence so that we can continue to keep in touch. For our celebration of Holy Communion on Palm Sunday we will not be serving by intinction. We will continue to keep you informed of other changes for us here.

You are encouraged to stay informed through government and health organizations and to follow best practices as recommended by both federal and provincial medical authorities. As the Canadian Council has said in a statement: the best preventative plans and precautions are motivated not by fear or hostility but by love toward others in our community, particularly vulnerable groups like the at-risk elderly and immune-compromised. So let's stay connected and remember to be careful and to care for one another.

Blessings, Andrea Wheaton (on behalf of the Church Board)