

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN QATAR

The Church of the Epiphany and The Anglican Centre

الكنيسة الانجليكانية في قطر



Rev. Canon Paul-Gordon Chandler
Rector (Senior Priest)

SIX WEEK TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE ANGLICAN CENTRE

Dear members of The Church of the Epiphany,

13 March 2020

As you are aware, the Anglican Church in Qatar is home to over 85 congregations making up 16,000-25,000 worshippers gathering in the Anglican Centre every weekend. We have a responsibility for the welfare of all these groups while they meet in our property. And as schools, universities, and special programs and events were being closed or postponed, we decided on 12 March to suspend all public church services, both our own as a church and of all the church communities that meet in our building to help safeguard against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. And today, the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs has asked all the Churches in the Religious Complex to suspend all public church services for six weeks, through the end of April 2020.

The Qatar government is committed to containing the spread of COVID-19. And we join them in doing all possible to contain the virus. This decision was not an easy one. As our world faces this virus and all that it entails, each of us will be called to make changes, adjustments and sometimes difficult decisions.

As Christians, we seek to live out the call of Christ of loving God and our neighbor, which means we are called to protect the health and wellbeing of our entire community. As residents of Qatar, we must do everything within our power to help stop the spread of this pandemic. That will mean decisions both large and small. It is our moral, Christian and civic obligation to take whatever steps are necessary.

For now, for the next six weeks, all church services and program within the Religious Complex will be suspended. As the Anglican Church in Qatar, because we are committed to being "a house of prayer for all people," we will be providing weekly livestream "virtual" worship services (see the Home page on our website: www.anglicanchurchinqatar.org). During this six-week period, our building will be closed to all non-essential visitors.

As you can imagine, we are making decisions one day at a time, and will approach each decision with the health of our community as our foremost priority. As followers of Christ, we are also committed to praying for all those suffering right now with this virus, as well as for those who are worried or afraid. And we encourage all to be continually strengthened by reading the Scriptures, which over and over again remind us of the promises of God.

These are extraordinary times. The tension is tangible, and many are anxious. The one thing that we know for sure is that God's love is stronger, deeper and more life-giving than anything else that comes our way. The Psalmist reminds us that our help comes from the Lord, and that is what we cling to as we make our way through this world together. We will update you with any new information as we go along. I also encourage you to check on your friends by telephone, and to encourage each other in the assurances of God's grace. As followers of Christ, we move through this journey of life together.

In prayer and blessing,
Paul-Gordon Chandler (Rev. Canon)

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