

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)

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE ANGLICAN CENTRE

Dear members of The Church of the Epiphany,

12 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 are being closed or postponed, we have decided to suspend all church services, both our own as a church and of all the church communities that meet in our building as of today through 22 March 2020 to help safeguard against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. The IDCC building next to ours in the Religious Complex will be doing the same.

The Qatar government is committed to containing the spread of COVID-19, and they advise against large gatherings of people. 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.

We have taken this decision as we seek to live out the call of Christ of loving God and our neighbor. We are called to protect the health and wellbeing of our entire community. As Christians, and 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, through March 22, all church services and programs at the Anglican Centre will be suspended. As the Anglican Church in Qatar, because we are committed to being "a house of prayer for all people," we are hoping to provide a livestream "virtual" worship service, and once those details are worked out, we will share the hyperlink and time. But as for today, our building will be closed to all non-essential visitors.

After this two-weekend suspension, we will reassess the conditions with the desire to reopen as soon as we can. 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,
Fr. Paul-Gordon +

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