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THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
L'EGLISE ANGLICANE DU CANADA

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May 1, 2009

Dear Friends:

In light of the World Health Organization's statements regarding the spread of H1N1 Influenza A, I offer the following information and recommendations for worship in parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton.

"H1N1 Influenza A illness outside Mexico has been mild to date, much like the usual seasonal influenza, including the six laboratory confirmed cases in Alberta. Albertans are reminded that hand washing is the single most important way to avoid getting the flu"<sup>1</sup>

Considering the current situation in Alberta, and after consulting the available information on the status of the H1N1 Influenza A illness, it is the opinion of the Diocese of Edmonton that sharing the peace and the use of the common cup are still acceptable practices in service of public worship at this time.<sup>2</sup> However, I ask that you review the following guidelines and ensure that they are practiced in your parish.

General Public Worship Guidelines:

- Hand sanitizers should be available at strategic locations and particularly at entrances of the Church. Parishioners should be encouraged to use them before attending worship or other activities. Another advisable location would be at the front of the church so that people can use it after sharing the peace, and prior to communion.
- All persons involved in the distribution or handling of the elements must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the elements and the setting of the table.
- I ask all clergy to review appropriate etiquette and proper methods for wiping the vessels between communicants with all chalice bearers.
- Fresh purificators need to be used for each service and for each communion cup. The purificator should be shaken out and repositioned so that a fresh spot is used each time it is used to wipe the common cup.
- All communion vessels must be washed with hot, soapy water, rinsed in hot water and air dried after liturgy and prior to storage.
- It is recommended that communion vessels made of clay, glazed or unglazed, not be used at this time.
- Instruct the people, "If you have the flu, a cold, or a cold sore, please don't drink from the cup or dip the bread into it." This can be done either through the bulletin, or verbally.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alberta Health Services Website, [www.albertahealthservices.ca/13039.htm](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/13039.htm)

<sup>2</sup> "Eucharistic practice and the risk of infection" by David H. Gould, [www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/euc-practice-infection.htm](http://www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/euc-practice-infection.htm)

<sup>3</sup> "Eucharistic practice and the risk of infection" by David H. Gould, [www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/euc-practice-infection.htm](http://www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/euc-practice-infection.htm)

Day to Day Ministry Guidelines:

- Wash hands regularly using soap and water whenever possible
- Use hand sanitizers when appropriate and during worship as per Diocesan guidelines.
- Sneeze or cough into your sleeve; if using a tissue or handkerchief, wash your hands following use.
- Clergy and laity who are feeling ill should avoid pastoral duties which involve physical interaction with others.
- Anglican tradition allows for receiving communion in one kind only. Members should continue to feel free to decline the chalice.
- Intinction (dipping the bread into the chalice) is discouraged since it is a significant health hazard

“A combination of current literature and expert medical advice concludes that sipping from the common cup and sharing a handshake represent minimal risk of transmission of contagion and fall within the parameters of the normal risks of daily living. On the other hand, the practice of intinction is a higher risk activity; fingertips coming in contact with the bread, which is then dipped in the wine, or fingertips coming in direct contact with the wine may contaminate the shared wine with pathogens other than those found in saliva.”<sup>4</sup> It is recommended that intinction be discouraged as an acceptable practice for public worship.

I remind you that receiving communion in part, that is only the bread or only the wine, has always been understood by the Church as entering into full communion. It is not an unusual practice, though it is one that we affirm and draw attention to at this time.

Clergy and laity are encouraged to remain informed about the H1N1 influenza, and the following websites are recommended for more information:

World Health Organization, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

Alberta Health Services, [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage prayers for any of our brothers and sisters suffering from influenza, and I encourage you to continue to come together in faith.

I hope that these guidelines answer your questions, and put to rest some of your concerns.

In Christ,

+Jane

The Right Rev. Jane Alexander  
Bishop of Edmonton

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<sup>4</sup> Diocese of Toronto pandemic response