



700 Kennedy Road
Scarborough ON M1K 2B5
Telephone: 416-755-5316
Mobile: 647-929-9542
rector@gracechurchscarborough.com
www.gracechurchscarborough.com

Dear friends in Christ,

I want to begin by wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I know that this year is unlike anything we have experienced in recent memory, but as Christians, we need to remain hopeful and joyful, even as the pandemic impacts every facet of our life.

We remain hopeful because we know vaccines are on their way; we remain joyful because while we can't do everything we have in past years we have our health and the prospect of a brighter future. We remain hopeful and joyful because while we won't be able to gather at Christmastime as usual, Jesus still came to be with us and one of us on that first Christmas long ago, that is true whether we worship together or not!

Although no official word has been given by the Province or the Diocese the leadership at Grace Church has made the pre-emptive decision to not hold in-person worship for at least the remainder of 2020, including Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. While this is certainly heartbreaking, we believe it is the most responsible thing for us to do in the current climate of rising case numbers within the city and the vulnerability of many of our congregants.

While we won't be worshipping in-person together, for those with internet connections we will be live-streaming a Christmas Eve service (<https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchScarborough/live>). The service will begin at 7:30 pm on Thursday, December 24th with 30 minutes of carol singing, if you need a hymn book to sing along with, please don't hesitate to come by the office and pick one up. You are welcome to submit requests via Facebook comments, or by emailing the office before December 24th. Following the Carol-Sing, we will continue with our Christmas Eve service as usual. All of our live services can be accessed via a call-in option for those who don't have access to sufficient data or internet access, please call the office and we can provide you with the phone number and access code.

For those wanting to experience worship on Christmas Day, we encourage you to join other Anglicans from all over the Diocese in following along the live stream offered by the Cathedral Church of St. James, available on the Diocesan Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/torontoanglican/live>).

Most years during Advent we have hosted a Lessons and Carols service and although the pandemic made such a service impossible this year we will be streaming a service of Christmas Lessons and Carols at 11 am on December 27th. This service will be filled with many of your favourite carols and is another opportunity to extend the Christmas season throughout the traditional twelve days of Christmas.

If you have regular or Christmas offerings, you can drop them off at the church office Monday, December 21st, Tuesday, December 22nd or Wednesday, December 23rd from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. If you haven't picked up your envelopes for 2021 yet, they are available when you drop off your offerings. If you drop off or mail your offerings to the church, please only use cheques – although our mailbox is more secure than

*Our mission is to **worship** God and **proclaim** Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and to **embody** – in word and action – God's reconciling love, justice, compassion and liberation, through which knowledge of God's reign is extended.*



A Parish of the
Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church
of Canada

before, we have had people attempt to steal from it and cash that is stolen cannot be tracked as a cheque can.

If you missed our Christmas Cake fundraiser and still would like to purchase Christmas Cake for the holidays we still have some light fruit cake tins (\$20) and mixed light/dark gift boxes (\$15). If you are interested, please let Pauline know at the church office.

After a two-week break following Christmas, we will resume the mid-week services we held during the Advent season, on Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon, beginning once again on January 12th and 14th. The limits on these services will remain at 10 people total with registration required to attend until we are notified by the province or the diocese otherwise.

I know that many of you were looking forward to worshipping together once again this Christmas, and it pains me that for the first time in my ministry there won't be a congregation gathered for the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, but I am heartened by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst that gives us the perseverance needed to endure the current crisis, I am filled with hope to see the support we have received at Grace and the support you are giving to one another from phone calls to letters and much more.

Once more I want to reiterate that the truth of God coming to dwell with us doesn't change if we are not able to worship together at Christmas. Jesus coming into the world is true even if no carols are sung, candles lit or any wreaths are hung. That shouldn't diminish the richness of our Christmas traditions, but it should encourage us in celebrating God's light entering into the darkness and brokenness of the world, darkness and brokenness which we are well aware of this year. The light of Christ cannot be overcome by a pandemic, or by the lockdown of our churches, or any other force in all of creation – that is the truth of Christmas, this year and every year,

My prayer for you is that the light of Christ would lighten your darkest days and that the Holy Spirit would give you the perseverance to endure this current season. Jesus is coming, let us welcome him this Christmas and every other day of our lives.

Blessings,

Rev. Graham McCaffrey

