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Dear friends in Christ,

I am writing to you at the beginning of the season of Epiphany, amidst yet another lockdown as COVID cases proliferate and our healthcare system struggles to cope with the recent surge of infections. I want to begin by thanking each and every one of you for your prayers and concerns for me and my family; thankfully we avoided severe illness – the vaccines did their job in mitigating that – and we also were able to avoid spreading the virus beyond immediate family. I know that the cancellation of in-person worship, yet again, was difficult to handle for some of you but I urge your patience and give thanks for your perseverance as we hope and pray this is the last time we will need to take such drastic action.

During the season of Epiphany, we celebrate the way that God's light breaks through in the person and ministry of Jesus and that much is true whether we are able to worship together or not. God's mercy and grace do not need an in-person gathering to be received – they can be accessed individually through prayer, singing songs of praise and reading scripture or communally through the gift of technology via our live streamed worship, our zoom hymn sings (**Thursday, January 27th at 7pm**, and every 2nd and 4th Thursday if we continue without in-person worship) and a bible study option (to be introduced later in January). Remember that God is with you through this isolating and dark time, and that what we are doing is protecting the most vulnerable in our midst from potentially life-threatening disease. I pray that you do not lose heart and look forward to (god-willing) seeing your faces again in the month of February.

Worship

For the remainder of January our worship will remain virtual. You can access our worship services at <https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchScarborough/live>. Services are live-streamed on Facebook, but you do not need an account to watch the live stream or the recorded video. If you would like to join the conversation via our comment section, you will need to register for an account. Currently we are only streaming one service every Sunday at **11 am**.

Finances

If you have regular offerings or if you haven't picked up your envelopes for 2022 yet, please call or email the office before coming to drop them off. Hours during this temporary lockdown vary and depend on the work that needs to be done in the building. If you drop off or mail your offerings to the church mailbox, please only use cheques. There will be a donation drop off on Saturday January 29th from 11-2 and Sunday January 30th from 9-11 am.

I wanted to thank you all for your immense generosity over the month of December. Through your offerings we were able to reduce our deficit by almost \$28,000 from **-\$33,473.39** as of September 30th to

*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

-\$5,548.65 by year end. This is something to celebrate, and sets us up for this year on a much better financial footing. We cannot however get complacent – we must continue to find ways to support the ministry of the church, through increased membership, increased offerings and increased rental and fundraising revenue streams. As mentioned in a previous letter we are moving towards a license agreement with a Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which will provide significant income, but will require us to get creative with when and where we operate certain events and ministries.

Church Leadership

Over the last two years of the pandemic, and beforehand, we have been dutifully and wonderfully served by Ryan Ramsden and Jonelle Douglas as Wardens. As ministries and ministry participants fell away because of COVID-19, much of the slack fell on them and our other staff Pauline Flemming and Rachel Colman to ensure that the regular business of the church continued while we were in lockdown or as many of you, our members, did not feel safe coming back into ministry roles. While I am immensely grateful for their service, I also acknowledge that it has taken a heavy toll on each of them and that their time serving the church in this way will be drawing to a close.

Both Ryan and Jonelle have agreed to stay on for one more year as Wardens as long as we are able to find them deputies to serve with them and learn the roles. As deputy you will learn under them and shoulder some of the work in preparation for taking over as Warden in 2023. I cannot stress enough the importance of finding a variety of leaders willing to serve the congregation moving forward. Having strong lay leadership is a sign of a vital and healthy church, even more than financial health. COVID has understandably made the job of offering oneself or finding leaders a challenge, but I hope that you will pray about this and consider offering yourself as a leader of the church in this way. Decisions about your willingness to serve in this capacity should be made known to me or Ryan and Jonelle before our annual Vestry meeting which is scheduled to be held (in-person God willing) on **Sunday, February 27th**.

Certainly, not everyone is suited for this role of leadership, but even if that is the case your gifts are needed now more than ever, so please consider how you might be able to offer those talents for the service of the Gospel here at Grace Church.

As we begin this new calendar year, feeling much like the last two years, I pray that God's love, peace and joy might shower upon you and those you love so that you might be able to see the glimpses of the Kingdom breaking through in your life and in the world around you. With God life and love always win out, sometimes we just need the patience to see it through to the end.

Blessings,

Rev. Graham McCaffrey

