



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST®
CHURCH

Ontario Conference

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For Immediate Release
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Ontario Conference COVID-19 Measures

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Every morning in Zoom worship, we pray for the health and general well-being of you and your families. We understand that at this time, our world is facing multiple crises—a global pandemic, an increase in mental health issues and financial struggles. Ontario Conference and its members are not immune to any of these issues. However, by leaning on God and pressing together, we can and will get through this.

Since its appearance at the end of 2019, the novel coronavirus (or COVID-19) has impacted us all directly or indirectly. In Ontario Conference, we have suspended major in-person events until June 24 and closed our churches and schools until further notice.

Please note that the Ontario Conference office also remains closed. However, we are keeping virtual office hours from 9 am-3pm, Monday to Thursday. Therefore, do not hesitate to reach out to Ontario Conference employees during these hours via email, preferably, or by leaving a voicemail at their extension.

Visit our website, covid19.adventistontario.org, for updates, resources such as a list of live streaming churches, and more. Also, on our website and YouTube channel (Youtube.com/AdventistOntario), you will find inspirational videos, including devotionals from Conference leaders and pastors. Let these powerful messages from the Word bring peace in the midst of this storm.

We must acknowledge the hard work of our pastors, elders and other church leaders who are employing available technologies to continue ministry and member care. We must also thank our members who have been faithful in returning tithes and giving offerings through AdventistGiving, PayPal and other methodologies.

As this pandemic continues, however, we are facing unprecedented challenges, particularly financial. Specifically, we experienced a 30% decline in tithe returns for the month of March, resulting in a year to date decline of 10% over the same period last year, as churches stopped meeting in person and the closure of non-essential businesses increased unemployment.

We want to assure you that beyond our prayers, we are taking several measures to continue to provide the support you need. These include:

- Reducing department expenses and putting a freeze on hiring, leading to significant savings
- Reassigning pastors to fulfill ministry needs across the Conference
- Assigning seven directors to provide support to seven church districts; assigning one support staff as a part-time assistant pastor

- Giving support staff new responsibilities, including offering members support via phone calls
- Shifting Ontario Conference ministry activities to online platforms for the immediate future, which will cut operating costs considerably over the next quarter

We trust that these measures are the best means by which we can continue to spread hope and wholeness across Ontario. We ask for your patience as we navigate these murky waters together with the faith that we will emerge stronger than before.

Finally, as Ontario Conference president, Mansfield Edwards, stated, “In these difficult times, we must be focussed on the fact of Christ’s soon coming. Let us encourage each other to remain faithful. Let us be creative in reaching others for Christ through total member involvement. His coming is near.”

God bless you and yours,
Ontario Conference Administration

Mansfield Edwards
President

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