UPDATING PARISH LISTS

**GENERAL BEST PRACTICES & TIPS**

**COVID-19 Pandemic Responses**

**The Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island**

**March 18, 2020**

This is a perfect time to enlist a few people from the parish to contact each household on the congregational list. Here are some suggestions about how to do this:

**WHY:** To gather information to update names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses; To favourably build upon your existing relationship as a faith community with this individual/family.

**WHO:** Seek out one or more parishioners who would enjoy this type of ministry connecting with people. Ideally these would be congregants who are warm, friendly and would not engage in gossip.

**HOW:** Divide your parish list up among the designated phone volunteers.

* Provide a brief, clear **phone script** to ensure the language is fitting for this type of pastoral work and that every important question is asked. Many people in our community are anxious and even fearful, so a gentle, compassionate approach in this phone ministry is essential.
* **Keep track** of the homes when a phone message is left. Be sure to try again or contact them via e-mail or social media (Facebook, etc.).
* Besides the basic contact information, you may also wish to **ask if they require any support** during the pandemic, such as errands, delivery of food or medications, etc.
* If not, perhaps they **might like to help** with practical ways to support those in need, being a person on call or on a roster.
* **Share information** about your website and/or Facebook page and how you will continue to keep in touch with people in your community. Ask them if they would like to be included in an e-mail newsletter if you have one.
* Ask them if they have any **prayers requests** at this time. Write them down. Check with the person to see how they want this information shared. Kept strictly confidential? Shared with clergy? Shared with a small prayer group? Included with congregational intercessions?
* **Be sure to thank** the person (or on the phone message) for this opportunity to stay connected. Express your appreciation for their time in this call, and let them know your local church is there for them if they require any help. (If they request to be removed from your parish list, agree to do that and inquire as to their reason. Take notes.)