



The Diocese of Huron

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

The Right Reverend Todd Townshend
Bishop of Huron

April 26, 2021

Dear Premier Ford,

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept through Ontario, our essential workers were hailed as heroes by many people including the provincial government. These workers kept our grocery stores and pharmacies open; they ran the factories, warehouses and farms that supply our food, medications and basic needs. But while we expect these people to continue to care for our needs through this third wave and beyond, we as a society have not cared for them. One of the important contributing factors to the third wave of COVID-19 in our province are outbreaks in workplaces where it is impossible for workers to always strictly maintain COVID-19 protocols such as a six-foot distance from others. Nor do these workers have the protection of being able to work from home. COVID-19 or other infectious agents enter workplaces through infected workers who continue to work despite their illness. Some may be asymptomatic and unaware they could spread the virus. Others have symptoms but still come to work. They do not do this by choice. They work because they have no paid sick days and cannot afford to miss one or more shifts. Missing shifts could mean that their family goes hungry or falls behind on their mortgage or rent. Provincially mandated paid sick days are needed urgently.

We learned today that the provincial government has again voted against paid sick days for essential workers. We strongly urge you to fight for this crucial way to protect public health. Please know that you have my support and that of Anglicans in the Diocese of Huron throughout Southwestern Ontario. I also hope that an on-going paid sick leave program may be seen as a positive legacy of this difficult time.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt Rev'd Todd Townshend
Bishop of Huron