
Places of worship: Keeping the faith during COVID-19

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Most of us first knew something significant was upon us on March 12 this year when Ontario's schools were shuttered. For those who belong to communities of faith, the pandemic didn't really hit home until a few days later, on the morning of March 15 – a Sunday.

When places of worship closed, it was generally assumed that this would be, at most, a temporary hiatus. Like those who hoped against hope that the First World War would be over by Christmas of 1914, Lindsay's churchgoers thought that they would be back in their meeting places by at least Easter. Alas, the most important festival in the Christian year came and went, with the "Alleluias!" of Easter being confined to private homes.



CAMBRIDGE STREET UNITED CHURCH.

Father Balonwu Opke, senior pastor at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, recalls the confusion and panic which rattled his congregation as mandatory closures were rolled out.

"We had to field a lot of phone calls with questions about what parishioners were to do in the absence of the Sunday liturgy," he says. "There were a few who were not too pleased with the closure."

Yet, as they have through generations of persecution, schism, reformation, war, economic depression, and much more, the churches stepped up to the challenge of having to do things a little differently.

"Going to Church" During COVID-19

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