



Greetings from Auburn and Lewiston.

As the Mayors of the beautiful sister cities of Auburn and Lewiston, we want to share our thoughts on the Coronavirus pandemic. Our cities – and the people who live in Androscoggin County - are strong and resilient, and we assure you that, **together**, we will get through these uncertain times.

It's an unsettling time locally and nationally; however, we as people have not changed. The residents of Androscoggin County are people of perseverance, heart and determination, and we will come out on the other side of this challenge standing stronger than ever before.

Every person in this county is important and deeply valued. However, in a time of isolation, it is natural to feel disconnected and perhaps even afraid.

With increased precautions and social distancing as our new normal, what can we do to support ourselves and each other? We can stay in contact with each other through phone, text, video chat, email, and even good, old fashioned cards and letters. And when we *do* connect, making an effort to convey strength and comfort can make all the difference. Share encouraging words, pray for each other, communicate about your feelings, fears, and emotions during this time, and remember to share CDC safety precautions with loved ones of all ages.

As a symbol of the unity within all of Androscoggin County, we ask local churches and faith-based organizations to “sound their bells” at noon each day until this crisis is behind us. It is our hope that the sounds of the bells will serve as a meaningful reminder that we are not alone.

We are navigating a “new normal” together, and although, we are not physically shoulder-to-shoulder, Androscoggin County residents have the heart, courage and strength to face our challenges, make safe choices, and demonstrate - albeit from a distance - kindness, compassion and mutual support for each other.

We encourage faith-based organizations that don't have an *actual* bell to ring to commit to some other activity at noon each day. It can be anything: a daily message on your FB page; a short video, encouraging people to keep faith; a daily noon-time email to parishioners; some small gesture to help build each other up through uplifting, positive, inspiring messages.

So, **let's “sound the bells” to remind us all to have faith**; faith in each other, in ourselves, and in our neighbors, leaders and communities.

Mayor Jason J. Levesque

Mayor of Auburn

Mayor Mark A. Cayer

Mayor of Lewiston