

November 20, 2020

My Dear Friends in Christ,

I have no doubt that you have heard yesterday's announcement from our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, that she has issued a new health order **suspending all in-person public worship**, as well as social and community gatherings both indoors or outdoors until December 7. Please note that this includes the upcoming three Sundays (November 22, 29 and December 6) at least. I am including an excerpt from the Diocesan Administrator The Very Rev. Ansley Tucker who speaks for the Bishop. Ansley affirms Dr. Henry's health order and has issued important and immediate changes to Covid-19 protocols across the diocese:

"..Provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry issued a new health order suspending in-person public worship, social and community gatherings—whether indoors or outdoors—for at least the next two weeks (until December 7) as part of widespread measures being implemented across the province. This order will be reviewed by provincial health officials and updates will be reported as they are made. Parishes should prepare for these restrictions to be extended and to plan alternate arrangements for Christmas accordingly.

...Community user groups should be advised to consult the [provincial health order](#) for further information as to how these restrictions apply to them." With Ansley's support and that of the wardens, I have declined to host outside groups for safety reasons (the exception is any 12 step group presently meeting in our facility).

"Dr. Henry has been very clear in her conversations with faith leaders about the invaluable service we provide to our parishioners and the wider community, providing hope in what has been a very difficult time. While she knows her decision to issue this order may be met with disappointment, she is calling us to draw from the deep wells of our compassion and mercy to care for those who are close to us. As Dr. Henry is fond of saying, "This isn't forever, it is just for now."

Obviously, such an order is disappointing to our parishioners and clergy. This is particularly so as we begin to think about Advent and Christmas. However, we know the critical situation facing our province and the rest of Canada, and the important role we play in helping to flatten the curve of COVID-19 in our province."

With the assistance of Mark and Jane Hird-Rutter, Barry De Silva and Kirsten Evenden, **we will recommence recording of morning prayer services** with the addition of a Longest Night service and an Advent service of Lessons and Carols. These will be made available as we proceed through Advent and into the Season of Christmas.

An email will be sent out on Tuesday Nov 24 with the link for the service on Nov 22. During that service, a presentation will be made by the Transforming Futures team and information will be given on how to vote online or by mail.

As we enter into this new wave of Covid restrictions, I am reminded of the hope and the anticipation we all feel as we move through Advent and realize the hope of the incarnation and Christmas. God **IS** with us. And we must continue to move forward together and yet...apart.

I send this with my dear love and blessings and an invitation for you to call me on my cell phone at 1 250 619-7528 should you need assistance or just someone to talk to.

I remain,
MJ+

Please Note: A copy of the complete letter is on our website: www.stpeterduncan.ca