



# Parish of St. John the Divine, Squamish

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Dear friends in Christ,

On May 20th, I received word from Archbishop Melissa Skelton about the diocese's plan for the phased reopening of church buildings for in-person worship. To read her letter and see the relevant documents you can visit our website.

To summarize, parishes, with permission, and having put in place a detailed safety plan, could resume in-person gatherings no sooner than June 14th. The decision when to initiate this step has been left up to each parish. Some parishes in our diocese have started minimal, in-person worship, while others have decided to wait.

After much thought and discussion, the parish council has made the decision to wait until September to resume in-person gatherings at St. John the Divine.

The main reasons for this is:

1. Our congregation is made up of a high proportion of vulnerable persons.
2. I will be on vacation and study leave for much of July.

Waiting until September will also give us the time we need to get ourselves ready for worship and gatherings that will look very different than what we are used to. It will also give us an opportunity to learn from our siblings in Christ who decide to proceed now.

Some of you might be feeling relieved at this decision, others grieved. Know that all of us made this decision with a great deal of thought and care. We tried to keep foremost in our minds God's call, and the safety and well-being of our community, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

Over the summer, and even after, we will continue to offer online services and opportunities to connect at a distance. I invite you to share these opportunities with friends, family and neighbours – one of the benefits of this time.

I also urge you to reach out to each other, and offer your love, prayer and support to the members of our church family, and to the wider community. The building is closed, but the Church is not; we are and will continue to be the Church, the the living, moving, breathing body of Christ in the world.

We can do this, dear friends. We can do this together, with God's help.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

CG+