

November 30, 2020

Dear Friends:

I am writing to you in these extraordinary times with an extraordinary proposal. It comes out of the recognition, in speaking with many clergy and lay leaders, that COVID has taken its toll on us. Our churches have responded faithfully and creatively, often having to learn new skills on the fly. But people are tired, stressed, and even a bit cranky.

I am proposing that in all the parishes of our diocese, we make a gift to each other of a true sabbath leave from December 26 to January 2. This means that all staff, clergy and lay—to whatever extent possible—have this week to step back, and to rest and refresh.

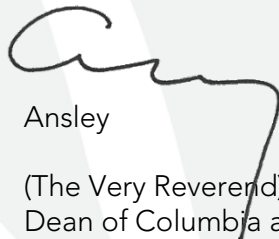
In practice, this means that our clergy, administrative staff and lay leaders are not expected to provide a service of worship, in person or online, on Sunday, December 27.

This week would not be treated as a holiday: it is a gift.

Of course, we know that sometimes, emergencies and other time-sensitive obligations arise, and these would have to be managed in the usual way. But for the most part, this is generally a low-key week in our common life and can easily afford us a chance to regenerate.

In the meantime, I hold you in the crucible of God's love, and pray that this may be a holy Advent for you.

Yours faithfully,



Ansley

(The Very Reverend) M. Ansley Tucker  
Dean of Columbia and diocesan administrator