

March 11, 2021

Dear People of the Parish

Last Monday Dr Bonnie Henry mentioned the possibility of opening the churches for Easter Sunday. I am sure many of your hearts leapt with joy at the thought, as did mine. At the same time, we were already well into our preparations for a beautiful and deeply meaningful set of online services for you from Holy Week and Easter Sunday. So now we had questions. Will they still be online? And in-person? The preparations for each are quite different. Then we received an email from the Synod office informing us that the churches in our Diocese will not be opening until April 12 at the earliest.

To quote from the letter from the Diocese:

*"Dr Henry's... announcement has led to questions about what this gradual easing will look like, how soon we will know, and whether we will be worshipping together in our church buildings on Easter Day. This uncertainty unfortunately puts undue pressure on parish leadership and particularly our clergy at an already busy liturgical time of year, during an unprecedentedly stressful period of our lives together... **Please expect that current diocesan restrictions around onsite worship will remain in place through April 12.**"*

Bishop Anna concludes:

"However, Dr Henry provided no definitive direction and was only prepared to say that it would not look like Easter as we are used to. We cannot reasonably make definitive plans to return to onsite worship based on this limited information.

But, Easter is a season, and we will look with hope and expectation that we will be able to gather again in our church buildings later this spring/early summer."

For my part, while I know this isn't the news we yearn for, I hope you'll understand the spirit of the decision – keeping all of us safe. I so look forward to worshipping in person with you once we *are* able to be back together. Soon, Lord, let it be soon.! That will be a day of rejoicing for us all!

Many blessings to you all on your Lenten journey,
Gyllian†