October 12, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in Christ who forms and shapes the Body.

You and I have been changed through these last two years, we have also have been changed as a corporate entity. While this is neither good nor bad, it is a distinct factor in the decision making that all of us face during these extraordinary days.

My directive regarding the gathering sizes ordered by the Government of Manitoba has received the widest array of response since the pandemic has begun. The response has caused me to pause for reflection and consideration concerning where the authority for making decisions regarding safe in-person worship practice should be. I believe that it is in the best interest of the Diocese that the corporation of each parish engaging in-person worship be responsible for deciding which one of the two Province of Manitoba safe gathering models they shall employ:

**a) Fully immunized people and those under 12 who are not eligible for the vaccine may gather without capacity limits**.

 and

**b) Indoor public gathering group sizes to 25 people or 33% capacity, whichever is greater, are permitted for gatherings that include unvaccinated people who are eligible to be vaccinated. Physical distancing is required. The exception to these criteria is that for funerals and weddings that include unvaccinated people who are eligible to be vaccinated, the capacity is limited to 25 persons or 25%, whichever is lower.**

Corporations choosing either option are responsible to respect all Diocesan safe gathering practices for in-person worship, including physical distancing, wearing of masks, keeping a record log of all participants and using caterers or folk with food handler accreditation for the distribution of food and beverage.

Corporations are required to advise their parish members meeting in-person which health order they are employing and how that order shall be lived-out in their unique environment.

I recommend that corporations choosing the first option (no attendance limits) should offer Spiritual Communion, this rather than Eucharist with full sharing of the elements among in-person participants.

Yours faithfully in Christ,



*An Anglican priest and a world class epidemiologist, Rev. Dr. Michael Garner, spoke to the House of Bishops a few weeks ago. I have pulled a few highlights of which I thought you would find helpful.*

* Lambda and Mu variants will almost likely cause a 5th wave for Canada

*Regarding Vaccine Passports for our considerations:*

* Effective tool to boost the immunization rates . . .
* Double vaccinated persons can get infected and transmit disease . . .
* Equity issues?
* Hospitality?
* When do you revoke the passport because of waning immunity?
* For churches it isn’t about ensuring everyone is double vaccinated, but it is about ensuring everyone who comes to Church is safe. Safe for the young (who cannot be vaccinated), the unvaccinated, the older person with waning immunity . . .