

February 16, 2022

Friends;

In a news conference yesterday, February 15, provincial government leaders including the premier, health minister and provincial health officer announced a timeline for easing of provincial pandemic restrictions. The full details can be found at www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions. Enclosed please find the updated diocesan guidance and protocols related to the same.

With the provincial transition to a long-term COVID-19 management strategy, and in consultation with the diocesan COVID-19 task force, I am pleased to announce that we are now in a position, based on the best available public health advice, to lift some of our restrictions for church-related events, including worship, social gatherings and meetings.

We recognize there may be some communities and individuals that do not feel comfortable returning to in-person gatherings. The pace of the return to full capacity will be at the discretion of parish leadership, if the provincial and diocesan requirements are met. Whatever decision is made, I encourage parishes, as they are able, to continue to use online tools to extend pastoral care and access to the liturgical rites and programs of the church.

This is a time to give thanks. I am grateful to all Anglicans of these islands and inlets for all that you have done, and the sacrifices you have made, over the last two years to keep each other and your neighbours safe. We have done remarkably well and have shown considerable resilience and creativity under very difficult circumstances.

At the same time, our personal and collective suffering and loss has been significant. Too many have died. The inequities of our society have been laid bare, with a disproportionate number of deaths being racialized people and those living in long-term care.

We will soon begin the season of Lent, a season of self-reflection, penitence and prayer. This Lenten season let us consider ways to acknowledge the grief and trauma we have collectively experienced and work together to build a more just and equitable society, in which all God's children are safe and healthy. Our God is a God of resurrection and new beginnings.

In Easter hope,



+Anna

DIOCESAN COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Effective February 17, 2022

To be reviewed and updated by the diocesan COVID-19 task force March 15.

Recognizing the uniqueness of space/facilities and comfort level of each parish and its members, the following changes are offered to support our shared commitment to the safety and well-being of all who come together in worship and in the use of our facilities. Each parish/community will need to consider its own readiness and capacity to address the lifting of restrictions.

Required

- Masks are mandatory in indoor spaces including at worship, except when leading in worship and/or consuming food and beverages.
- Worship services continue to be capped at 50% capacity unless proof of vaccination is required to attend, in which case full capacity is permitted as per provincial health order.
- Proof of vaccination must be shown at all indoor events, with the exception of worship services of 50% capacity or less. Those who are not vaccinated are asked to continue to worship online only.
- Eucharist in one kind only.
- Visitation guidelines for long-term care facilities remain in effect. One-on-one communion permitted (bread only).

Permitted

- Coffee/social gatherings with a safety plan outlining how food and beverages will be handled. Masking and proof of vaccination required.
- Weddings and funeral receptions. Masking and proof of vaccination required.
- Pastoral care home visits. Masking and proof of vaccination of pastoral visitors required.
- Ash Wednesday imposition of ashes.

Recommended

It is recommended that hospitality be limited to coffee/snacks only until March 15 when Public Health issues its next update. Please refrain from hosting Shrove Tuesday dinner and other community meals.

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diocesan COVID-19 task force