

**The Diocese of Rupert’s Land**

The Right Reverend Geoffrey Woodcroft

Bishop of Rupert’s Land

October 14, 2020

Dear Disciples of Rupert’s Land,

May Christ be with you.

On March 12, 2020 I wrote to you asking that corporate (in person) worship by suspended for an undetermined amount of time. Slowly, we established good practices and behaviors that allowed for us to once again meet in person while ensuring a low risk environment. You did very well, and the government of Manitoba recognizes your due diligence.

Today, October 14, 2020, Manitoba reported 145 positive cases, compared to the 7 cases on March 12, yet we remain in Code Orange. I believe that the Body of Christ, the Church, the gathered community has an elevated risk for infection and transmission of COVID 19.

A non-Anglican congregation in Prince Albert was fined $14,000 for violating protocol orders. An Anglican parish in the Province of Rupert’s Land closed its doors last week when a member tested positive for COVID 19. These are sobering examples of the serious condition our nation faces today.

Please take the necessary time to discuss the September 28 Protocols with vestries and parish leadership. Should you be unable to follow these protocols, and other local health authority protocols, please make the decision to suspend worship immediately.

I wish to highlight a few of our diocesan protocols that have been met with some confusion:

1. NO parish MUST be open, or be reopened
2. Wearing a mask is mandatory for ALL participants of worship and gatherings of our Church, this includes presiders and preachers
3. Wine is NOT to be shared in celebrations of the Eucharist,
4. Music: Instrumentalists (organ, piano, percussion, guitar) and one vocal soloist, physically distanced and masked, are acceptable

Should the Province issue a Code Red status, I expect that those parishes within the Code Red zone will suspend corporate (in person) worship and gatherings immediately. Those offering live and recorded virtual ceremony are expected to follow the Chief Medical Officer’s guidelines, which may or may not vary from past experiences.

Let us continue to pray for one another, and to offer encouragement, skill and resource to build one another up for the work of discipleship.

Yours in the One who moves amongst us now,



The Rt Rev. Geoffrey JJ Woodcroft