

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

Greetings Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This letter is primarily to address the COVID pandemic situation and our response to it; but I will begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to you all for your faithful ministry and service to our Lord, to our congregations, and to the communities in which we serve. Particularly a big thank you for all of the worship that was offered, mostly online, through Holy Week and Easter. While we may not feel we have completely adjusted, nor may we feel completely at home in this pandemic environment, I know we have reached many folks, both regular attenders as well as non-attenders; and your pastoral concern and care for the members of Christ's body is deeply appreciated.

As you know, the COVID numbers are rising once again, and the presence of the variants has greatly increased in relation to the total number of cases in the province. The Provincial Government has returned the province to Stage 1 protocols and restrictions as of last night. I have asked our Pandemic Taskforce in the diocese to weigh in on our current circumstances, but in the meantime, I am writing to you to strongly urge that those who had resumed in person worship return to online. The new variants are highly infectious and cases are appearing in various places around the province. While some congregations may be in locations where few cases have occurred to date, the ongoing evidence tells us that the virus can easily be carried to those places and spread quickly as folks are off their guard. As we live our Lord's commandment to love our neighbors, we most certainly do not want to be the agents by which the pandemic is spread, and by which the more vulnerable in our communities become ill, suffer long-term health impacts, or even die. Helping to impede the spread of COVID by staying online and working from home in every way possible demonstrates our concern and care for all our people and for our communities. Of course, caring for those who are isolated and lonely or in particular need is always a priority, and may require some in-person attention – and I certainly trust your good judgment in those pastoral decisions.

Every year, we proclaim Christ's victory over "the old order of sin and death" in the midst of a world still beset by brokenness and sin. In the midst of a pandemic, we are more poignantly reminded that Christ's victory, while completed in his death and resurrection, is an unfolding reality, and we are challenged to open our hearts and minds to the ways that we live out that victory in our current circumstance, bearing witness to our faith with our words and our lives.

May God continue to strengthen and uphold you in the work of ministry to which we are called in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

+ Gregory Ken-Wilson