



called by God to live and proclaim the Gospel

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The Diocese of Moosonee

Anglican Church of Canada

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June 8, 2021

To the people of God in the Diocese of Moosonee

Dear friends,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the friendship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. The mighty winds and fire that came on Pentecost filled the disciples with a renewed vision, fresh strength, and the ability to proclaim the good news of Jesus, with simplicity and boldness. Let us reaffirm our commitment to being members of Christ's body and, living into its promise, celebrate the global witness of the church, and contribute to the healing of the world.

I first want to offer a word of gratitude for the many ways in which you continue to be the church in these extraordinary times. Thank you for your faithfulness in preparing and offering worship, bible studies, and gathering for regular meetings. Outreach continues in fresh new ways with the hungry being fed and the homeless having strong advocates through your voices. Connections of all kinds continue to take place through your ministry of pastoral care and mutual encouragement. Prayer has sustained us all.

A word about stewardship. Even though we are not in our buildings there continue to be ministry costs – please continue to make your regular offerings for the work of the church. There is no doubt that the pandemic has shown we are an 'essential service'.

I now want to apprise you of a cautious plan to reopen churches for worship. Good news came from the Federal Government that over half of all Canadians have received at least one dose of the vaccination. The province continues to expand booking eligibility and access to the vaccines in mass clinics, pharmacies, hospitals, and in mobile pop-up locations.

The Covid situation in Quebec has improved immensely, with cases continuing to drop. In the James Bay Cree Territory there is even more good news, there are 0 cases and no one is in hospital or in the ICU. The Cree Nation Government stated: *“Restrictions in the Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee are still the most liberal in the province of Quebec a testament of the strength of the Cree leadership, and determination of the Cree people.”*
Eeyou Istchee Reopening Plan

Currently all of the Cree communities in the Quebec side of the James Bay Deanery are in Phase 4, which allows for

- Outdoor gatherings 150 maximum
- Indoor gatherings 50 maximum – there are protocols available for larger indoor gatherings from the Public Health and Safety Department.
- Offices and places of business are open with precautionary measures carefully in place.
- Vaccinations began in Eeyou Istchee Territory Schools on June 3, 2021 for children ages from 12-17.

Late last week, using an abundance of caution and making no firm promises, the Ontario Provincial Government announced its strategy for the slow reopening of our province in three stages, with each stage lasting for **at least 21 days**. Movement to the next stage will depend upon vaccination rates and positive trends in covid cases.

The Ontario provincial outline is as follows:

- **Step 1** there will be a focus on resuming outdoor activities where the risk of transmission is lower, with gatherings of up to 10 people.

The forecast date for Step 1 is June 14th, 2021.

- **Step 2** there will be a further expansion of outdoor gatherings and the resumption of indoor religious services at 15% capacity. Outdoor capacity in Step 2 will be 25.

The forecast date for Step 2 is July 5th, 2021.

- **Step 3** greater access will be given to indoor settings, with restrictions.

The forecast date for Step 3 is July 26th, 2021.

The Reopening of our Churches

With all this in mind I hope we can reopen our churches beginning on June 27th the Provincial house of bishops are updating the protocols for safely opening which will be ready on June 15th

The revised protocols to the RED STAGE will include the celebration of Holy Eucharist (bread only) for small groups, as well as the distribution of Reserved Sacrament for those able to drive to the church following a ‘live stream’, or small in person Eucharist service. For those unable to drive to the church to receive communion, provision will be made to bring Reserved Sacrament to peoples’ homes. To adhere to our Screening in Faith protocols, two individuals will be required to bring Reserved Sacrament to homes.

If any of these new protocols will not work in your setting, please continue with whatever practice has been working for you within the present restrictions provincially and in the church. I encourage every congregation to offer a Morning Prayer service on Sundays.

While we recognize that many will be happy for the reopening of their church, we are mindful that some, especially elders may not feel comfortable in public gatherings. We know our clergy will continue to be attentive to their spiritual needs.

Given the above directions, I, with you, look to the time when we can re-open our buildings in full a capacity. In the meantime, we appreciate your patience.

We are grateful beyond words that through this time of pandemic, the Great Truth Teller has drawn us yet closer to one another in Christ, in the ministries to which, we are called. With much love we pray for one another without ceasing.

Be assured that we are doing everything to bring us together again as communities of faith following what has been a challenging and sad time for many. We can never go back to 'normal', but we can and must look to the future with hope. God is faithful and is always with us through the precious indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

May God's peace be with you, and in you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Anne: Moosonee". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

The Most Rev. Anne Germond
Archbishop of Moosonee