



December 22nd, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ in the Parish of the Valley,

Grace and peace to you as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

Yesterday the Premier of Ontario, the Hon. Doug Ford, announced that our province would be entering a province-wide COVID-19 lockdown effective December 26th, 2020 at 12:01am. Following the Premier's announcement our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Shane A.D. Parker, announced that, effective the same date and time, the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa would move from the Amber Stage to the Red Stage of our diocesan COVID-19 "In This Together V2" pandemic plan. This means that all in-person worship services in our diocese after December 26th at 12:01am are now cancelled. Worship throughout the Parish of the Valley as of Boxing Day will be online only for the next 28 days, or until further notice.

Bishop Shane further directed the leadership of each parish in our diocese to review plans currently in place for worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and to make contextual decisions appropriate to each parish's local community. **The clergy-team for the Parish of the Valley met via Zoom this morning and came to the consensus decision that we will proceed with in-person worship services across our parish on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as previously planned.** We are fortunate that our local communities, served by the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, remain a "green zone" in terms of active cases of COVID-19. As such we feel we can still safely meet for in-person worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, provided that our Amber COVID-19 protocols are strictly observed.

To that end, we ask everyone across the Parish of the Valley to please continue to be vigilant. If you feel ill in any way or suspect you may have been exposed to COVID-19, please do not attend worship in-person on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. When attending worship please also take extra care to maintain physical distance, refrain from unnecessary conversation or moving around the church, and observe all other Amber worship protocols. For those remaining at home a virtual Christmas service has been prepared for our parish which will be broadcast over the internet and on local television. Please watch for a link to this service, together with other holiday worship resources from our parish, which will be sent to you via email later this week. Our clergy team will be continuing to offer weekly online worship opportunities as we head into 2021.

Dear friends, Christmas this year will be different, but the love of God remains unchanged. The love that came down from heaven in the form of the Christ Child continues to enfold us and will always see us through. From our families to yours, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Bird".

The Right Reverend Michael Bird
Incumbent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Clifford".

The Reverend Canon Susan Clifford
Associate Incumbent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Brown".

The Reverend Matthew Brown
Associate Incumbent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Durrett".

The Reverend Richard Durrett, CD
Interim Assisting Priest