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TO: Clergy, wardens, lay readers, and lay pastoral visitors
FROM: Bishop Bruce Myers
DATE: Thursday 4 February 2021
RE: Revised COVID-19 restrictions

The Quebec government has announced further revisions to its COVID-19 restrictions, some of which relate to places of worship. **These new restrictions are in effect as of February 8** and may be revised as soon as February 22.

SUNDAY SERVICES – Churches in a **red zone** are restricted to **no more than 10 people** attending a Sunday service. This number does not include clergy, lay readers, or musicians. Churches in an **orange zone** are restricted to **no more than 25 people** attending a Sunday service. This number also does not include clergy, lay readers, or musicians. The other provisions outlined in the *Protocols for the Reopening of Church Buildings to Public Worship* document issued last August (and available at quebec.anglican.ca) must also be respected.

FUNERALS – Funerals may still take place in church buildings, but with **a maximum of 25 people in the congregation, whether the church is in a red zone or an orange zone**. This number does not include clergy, funeral home workers, or others assisting with the service. Masks should be worn throughout the service and individuals from different households should maintain a distance of two metres from each other. The names and contact details of everyone who attends a funeral must be recorded for the purposes of contact tracing. Food and beverages must not be served after the funeral service. Families of the deceased may also receive condolences at the church before the funeral service, so long as these same guidelines are observed.

As has been the case since our diocese's churches began reopening to in-person worship last September, the choice to offer in-person services under these conditions is left up to each local corporation, ideally in consultation with members of the congregation.

PASTORAL VISITING – Most in-person pastoral visiting—whether at a hospital, care home, or an individual's residence—remains prohibited during this lockdown period. The government has, however, made two important exceptions: 1) A one-on-one pastoral visit may take place in a church building, so long as the usual precautions (i.e. hand sanitizing, physical distancing, mask wearing) are observed; 2) A dying individual may receive a pastoral visit at their home. If necessary, such a visit may take place during curfew hours, and a letter of authorization to show authorities is available from the Synod Office. In other cases, you are encouraged to use other means, such as the internet and telephone, to keep in touch with the members of your community during this new and intensified period of physical isolation.

HALL RENTALS – The rental of parish halls and other such spaces remains prohibited during this lockdown period, unless the organization renting the space falls under one of the categories for which the provincial government has made an exception, such as community organizations.

TRAVEL BETWEEN REGIONS – Travelling between regions of Quebec—particularly from a red zone to an orange zone—continues to be discouraged. For this reason I will continue to delay any in-person pastoral visits to the congregations of the diocese until the overall situation in the province improves further.

I share your fatigue at these restrictions, and like you I long for our collective emergence from this pandemic. However, as our public health leaders have reminded us, it's by respecting these restrictions that we will arrive at the pandemic's end more quickly and with less loss of life. As a church, we continue to do our part in the collective effort of sacrifice for the sake of protecting others, and in so doing we are following Jesus' call to love our neighbours.

As ever, if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to be in touch with either myself or Archdeacon Edward Simonton. Stay safe and well, and be assured of my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name "Bruce" in a cursive script.