

March 25, 2020

*To all members and friends of the Diocese of British Columbia*

Dear friends,

Marcia and I are now on our eighth day of quarantine after returning from the USA. I am watching online how we continue to be church during these days, and I write you because I have been asked most recently what Easter might look like for this diocese of islands and inlets.

Thank you to those who are trying to keep worship going in a variety of ways. However, despite our hope for the alternative, I am sorry to confirm that our church buildings must remain closed. We should not be in our buildings in groups of any size. I am also sorry that any gathering during Holy Week will not be permitted. I have been asked if we can gather outside (for example, at the beach), but the answer must be no. The Canadian government and our health officials have instructed all people to stay in our homes and only come out for essential reasons. Thus, Easter, for us, must happen in our homes.

I ask you to use your imaginations as we approach Easter. How might you celebrate this joyous occasion (Christ is risen!) from your living rooms and kitchen tables? How can you make this day special for you and your family, even if you are not all living under the same roof? Will it be through the sharing of food, the planting of seed, or the singing of your favourite songs? Share your ideas with others, and remember that when Christ rose from the tomb that day, he did not return to just that place (nor did he return to just our church buildings), but he returned to the whole of Creation and will be found everywhere again on April 12 this year.

The two other areas that we must seriously look at are weddings and funerals:

All weddings must be postponed and rescheduled to a time when family and friends can gather safely to celebrate with the couple.

All funerals must also be postponed and rescheduled to a time when family and friends can gather safely to celebrate in memorial.

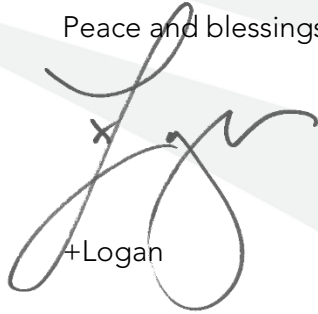
I hold a great sadness in my heart as I inform you of these requirements. We have worked hard at being a welcoming and inclusive community. However, when there is danger in our closeness and touch, we must be caring and supportive in new and different ways. Again, I challenge you to be imaginative in how we might ease the hurt of postponing these events. Send notes of love and comfort to those who must put off their celebrations of love or life. Be there with those who are grieving through your words: make a phone call or set up a Skype chat so those who are disappointed do not

feel alone. And remind them, our celebrations of life and love will be even more meaningful in the months to come when we are safe to gather again.

At the parish level, we continue to gather through Zoom and Microsoft Teams and other online resources. I have also asked our diocesan communications officer, Catherine Pate, to make our diocesan teleconference line available to parishes wishing to use this option. She will be in touch with the clergy and wardens regarding this.

Remember that although we may be far from each other, the mystery of our faith is that God is never far from us. (Psalm 139:7-12)

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Logan', with a small cross symbol above the first letter.

+Logan