



**DIOCESE OF KOOTENAY**  
*The Anglican Church of Canada*

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The Rt. Rev. Lynne E. McNaughton, *Bishop*

May 15, 2020

Dear Incumbents, Clergy, Wardens and Parish leaders:

Since the Province of B.C. Health Ministry has announced this week that churches may reopen, I need to clarify with you what will happen in this diocese.

Even with this permission from the Province, I am continuing the suspension of in-person worship in churches around the diocese of Kootenay, at least until the end of June. A large proportion of our parishioners and many of our clergy are in the vulnerable population of 60+. We do not yet have enough data about the effects of re-opening, and early examples from other countries suggest great prudence is necessary to avoid a fresh outbreak. I think we are called to model to society patience and an abundance of caution. For the protection of health, I think it is wise to wait, to move more slowly towards reopening our church buildings for worship and social functions.

Incumbents may ask me for special permission for small outside gatherings.

Parishes have established a good pattern of electronic (including phone) pastoral care, worship and social gatherings. Please continue this. If the preparation of worship has become burdensome I have encouraged clergy to collaborate, at least occasionally sharing with another parish in worship.

There will be a short Diocesan-wide celebration of Pentecost, Sunday May 31, details to be announced the week after next.

Thank you for your patience through this. Thank you for your vital support of each other amidst the stress and uncertainty of this time. We await a better day!

I hold all of you in prayer, trusting in the One who has loved us from the beginning. May the God of hope surround you and give you strength.

Yours in Christ,

+Lynne

*Living Faith, Proclaiming Christ, Growing Churches, Empowering Mission*