



ANGLICAN DIOCESE MONTREAL

The Right Reverend Mary Irwin-Gibson
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December 30, 2021

Dear Colleagues and friends in Christ,

This evening Premier Legault and Dr. Arruda announced stricter measures in order to address increasingly high rates of transmission of Covid-19 and resulting hospitalizations. In addition to a curfew of 10pm (to 5am) and several business closures, the Premier announced the closure of Places of Worship. **We are, therefore, reverting to Phase I Worship, which means, effective 5pm tomorrow, all Anglican Church buildings in the Diocese of Montreal will be closed and worship will be, once again, only online.** Exceptions for funerals and weddings can be made.

In the case of funerals, if held indoors, a maximum of 25 people may attend a funeral, not including clergy, volunteers, or funeral home personnel. If next of kin are receiving condolences before the funeral, a maximum of 25 people is permitted in the church building at any given time. Vaccination passports are not required, but masks must be worn at all times and physical distancing observed. If held outdoors, a maximum of 250 may attend a funeral, but masks must be worn and a distance of at least one metre must be maintained between those attending.

In regards to weddings, they may only be held outdoors, with a maximum of 250 people in attendance. Masks should be worn and physical distancing respected. A reception may follow the wedding, but it must also be held outdoors and a maximum of 50 people may attend.

In-person pastoral visits are prohibited and pastoral visiting should be done online or over the telephone. In cases of extreme necessity or emergency where a visit to a hospital or residence is needed, such visits are to be carried out following the directives of the particular institution you are visiting – taking all precautions possible to avoid transmission of the virus.

Emergency pastoral visits after curfew are permitted so long as the individual making the emergency visit carries authorization that can be shown to law enforcement officers. If you require such a letter, please contact me directly at bishops.office@montreal.anglican.ca.

If you have any questions, please be in touch with Archdeacon Robert Camara.

We were all hopeful that this 4th wave would not materialize but it has. Do take time for yourselves to rest and to look after your own needs as well as that of your families. Please urge your friends and parishioners to get their booster vaccine shots. If you have some who are not yet vaccinated, I invite you to use your best pastoral approaches to lovingly listen to them and encourage them that now is the time.

If you are not able to provide online worship, please find out what your neighbouring congregations are offering and let your parishioners know what is available.

Please know that you are in my prayers as we adjust once again to strong measures to curb the spread of the virus. God is with us through this all and I give thanks that we are in the season of Christmas when we celebrate God's great compassion and love for us all in coming to live among us.

May grace flow abundantly on us all in this holy season.

Every blessing,

+ Mary