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Date: March 18, 2021 at 4:54:40 PM EDT
To: Bishop's Office <bishopsoffice@ottawa.anglican.ca>
Subject: Special COVID Communiqué from Bishop Shane 2021-03-18

Dear Friends,

You are all aware of recent rapid changes in restrictions that have been imposed on regions across Ontario and Quebec as the spread of COVID-19 variants continues. In some parts of our diocese, health units have introduced more restrictive class orders in order to curtail spread—even as the rollout of vaccines intensifies. This pandemic battle is very real and has caused a material change that cannot be disregarded as we consider our plans as a diocesan church.

Accordingly, I feel compelled to immediately inform you that our diocese will remain in our Red Stage until further notice. This means that we must again keep our buildings closed for in-person worship as we observe Holy Week and celebrate Easter.

I said last year that we must become expert in doing ministry in every stage of our plan. I know, from many virtual visits in parishes across our diocese, that we have indeed become expert at worshipping in Red Stage—as well as offering effective ministries of pastoral care, teaching, outreach, and fellowship. Let us rely on our expertise, creativity, collaboration, and strong faith to mark this holiest time in the Christian calendar with intention, conviction, and hope.

I pray that many of our parishes will choose to offer the Eucharist on Easter Day, within Red Stage guidelines. If you do, I commend the following *invitation and prayer, to be offered to those at home during the time of communion, immediately after the breaking of the bread, and before those “on screen” have received:

Celebrant: *Dear friends, I invite you in this moment, wherever you may be, to receive Christ, in communion with the saints, and the gathering of God’s people, unseen and yet present with us now. Many are made one.*

All: ***We receive you Lord Jesus Christ, we welcome your presence in us, and together proclaim our love for you; with our hearts, minds, our souls and our strength, with the saints we worship you, with the angels we adore you, with your whole Church we proclaim your reign. Come to us, though many, and make us one in you. Amen.***

(*adapted from a rite arranged by the Diocese of Niagara www.niagaraanglican.ca)

We will continue to monitor the situation very closely, and will hold off on any decision to move to Amber Stage reopening until we are reassured that we are likely at the beginning of the way out of the pandemic. God willing, and human beings behaving in

wise and considerate ways, we will soon see our way out of this challenging season in the life of our world.

Be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love; be certain that the indestructible love of God, perfectly revealed in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, is with you; and be at peace as you entrust our future to the Creator of Creation.

If you have any questions about this Communiqué, please contact the COVID-19 help desk at C19helpdesk@ottawa.anglican.ca.

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