

Dear friends and colleagues,

Grace and peace to you as we enter these late days of Advent.

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise across our Synod, we are reaching out to you today to offer a few suggestions intended to ensure a safe and meaningful worship experience for those who choose to gather in-person throughout the coming days.

As always, we ask you to ensure that masking, hand hygiene, physical distancing, screening and ventilation practices are being closely monitored and adhered to. Science tells us that COVID-19 is airborne. As such, these timely practices, combined with strong support for vaccination, remain our first defence.

As a reminder, this includes ensuring the proper use of masks by worship leaders and participants, the availability of hand sanitizer/hand washing stations, the opening of windows and doors during/between services to increase ventilation, contact tracing, and planning for a minimum of six feet distance between attendees (regardless of vaccination status). In some places, this will mean a return to practices which have been discontinued in recent months.

In addition, and given the most recent projections announced by our four provincial governments, you may also wish to:

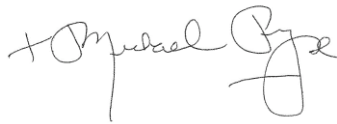
- consider limiting the number of hymns sung in worship, reduce the number of verses per hymn, arrange for a cantor/soloist/small choir instead of congregational singing, or refrain from congregational singing during in-person worship;
- consider reducing attendance capacity by scheduling additional worship services and/or collaborating with neighbouring faith communities to offer alternative options;
- consider limiting exposure by shortening the length of worship to not more than 45 minutes;
- consider pivoting to online/mediated worship only at this time.

In preparation for the season of Christmas, it is also important for congregational attendance protocols to be well communicated in advance via whichever medium is most effective in your context.

If you have not already done so, please carefully review and examine whatever public health directives are in place for your particular community. We encourage you to always err toward the most stringent measures to help safeguard and protect the health and well-being of those who are physically attendant within our church buildings.

Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you, and the communities with whom you serve. Your continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of all God's people remains an act of love, and a gift of care. We continue to monitor this situation closely and remain committed to supporting you as we journey together. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance.

May God be with you in your planning and preparations!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Pryse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a cross symbol at the beginning.

Bishop Michael Pryse

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Snook". The signature is cursive and includes a cross symbol at the end.

Rev. Adam Snook