



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH  
A People United in Justice and Love



# CHRISTMAS AT CHRIST CHURCH



December 22, 2021

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.” Isaiah 9:2-7



To the People of Christ Church and the Wider Community:

Dear Friends in Christ,

The story is told that the Three Magi came to meet Jesus and his mother, Mary, upon his birth. They came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Lavish gifts fit for a king. Some scholars suggest that the gifts were not just precious metals and ointments but rather brought to the holy family for medicinal purposes. For many centuries myrrh has been used as an analgesic to comfort the wounded. We once again find ourselves amid a painful pandemic that many believed was soon to be past us this Christmas season. As we know, this is not the case. It is our time to look out for one another more than ever. Many of us feel wounded and tired of the continued need to mask and isolate. The limitations we face have indeed taken a toll on our mental and physical health.

As you are most likely aware, Dr. Strang and Premier Houston addressed the province yesterday, reporting 522 new cases of COVID. Since December 15<sup>th</sup>, there have been 2,590 cases identified. In yesterday's press release, the Premier said:

we did not want to impose more restrictions on Nova Scotians leading into the holidays. But even if illness remains mild, the exponential spread of the Omicron variant is threatening critical workforces like healthcare, fire, police and paramedics...We need further restrictions to ensure everyone slows down, reins in their socializing, and limits opportunities for the virus to spread.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20211221004>

With the new restrictions to slow the spread of the Omicron variant of the virus, worship capacity is now limited to 50 people. Before yesterday's announcement, we were scheduled to have a 4:00pm, 6:00pm, and 8:00pm services. Preregistration was required, with the 4:00pm service requiring proof of vaccination. At that time, our capacity was 100 people safely in the church. Our 4:00pm service had reached capacity and the 6:00pm service, with some availability at 8:00pm.

With this information in hand, the wardens and I recognize that we would need to determine who could attend which service if we moved ahead with in-person worship. This is a very difficult thing to do. Therefore, the wardens and I have made the decision to move our Christmas Eve worship to an online format. These services will be Services of the Word because we celebrate Holy Communion when we gather together, and we cannot safely do so at this time if we wish to include everyone.

This decision weighs heavy on my heart. If you had asked me a month ago if we would be in this position, I would not have believed it. It was my prayer that we could celebrate the Birth of our Saviour together, in person, and with great merriment. However, given what we know, we at Christ Church want to set the example of hospitality for our parishioners and the wider community. We want to keep everyone safe. We want to slow the spread of the virus to get back into church safely and without limitation as such in-person worship will not be held until the new year.

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday School hosted a Christmas Pageant: "The First Christmas." It was a delight to see all the angels, the shepherds and animals who came to show their love to the baby Jesus. In many ways, the first Christmas was very simple. And so again is our Christmas. I pray that we do indeed slow down to reflect on the importance of what Christmas is about: God revelled in the Son, a light which is brighter than the darkness, a light that is our beacon of hope, a star that provides us with guidance for our shared journey.

We do not anticipate that we will begin worshipping in person until the new year.

Please stay informed through email, Facebook, and our website for further details and links for our services. An email will be sent to the parish so you can enjoy Christmas worship in the comfort of your own home.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyle Wagner".

The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner  
Rector, Christ Church, Dartmouth  
Diocese of Nova Scotia, PEI  
Anglican Church of Canada