



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth, NS
www.christchurchdartmouth.com

June 18th, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you on this beautiful, hot day in June, in thanksgiving for God's creation!

This Sunday, our National Church recognizes National Indigenous People's Day. Our Primate, along with the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the National Indigenous Bishop, writes in a letter today:

The Government of Canada describes this as a day for all to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We give thanks for these heritages, cultures and contributions. We honour Stewards of the Land and Defenders of the Water.¹

At our last General Synod in Vancouver, I served as a clergy delegate for our diocese. I witnessed a significant piece of the reconciliation process unfold when our then Primate Archbishop Fred Hiltz apologized for our explicit role in the degradation of First Nation's, Inuit and Métis spiritual practices. He said:

Today, I offer this apology for our cultural and spiritual arrogance toward all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit and Métis – and the harm we inflicted on you. I do this at the desire of many across the Church, at the call of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, and at the request and with the authority of the Council of the General Synod.²

As Canadians we have much work to do as we continue the process of reconciliation. One of the resources that I have found helpful in providing a greater understanding of the history of our country, is an informative documentary that delegates watched at General Synod. It was my hope to host a viewing of this in our parish hall, but given our inability to gather safely, I encourage you to watch: "Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen lands, Strong Hearts" This film was produced by the national church and can be found online at:

<https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/doctrineofdiscovery/>

¹ https://www.anglican.ca/news/national-indigenous-peoples-day-june-21-2020/30026949/?fbclid=IwAR3hoSGGk3TZBypziTuQ5VnTqG97vXP3RMg4j3bZZz_EgQyzEOkLDQGg7NY

² <https://www.anglican.ca/news/an-apology-for-spiritual-harm/30024511/>

This Sunday, the Rev. Canon Dr. Jody Clarke will be leading our worship service as the Church continues its road to reconciliation. I encourage all of us to make our best effort to recognize this important Sunday, be it online at our 10:00 am Zoom Worship service, or through our own personal prayers.

On the Matter of reconvening Worship Services at Christ Church:

As you are most likely aware, Premier Stephen MacNeil, and Dr. Robert Strang announced that the “bubble” is burst, and some restrictions concerning social distancing have been lifted.

The news release of today June 18th reads in part:

People can now gather in groups of up to 50 with physical distancing. Members of the same household or a group of 10 can attend such gatherings together without physical distancing. The larger gathering limit of 50 applies to social events, faith gatherings, sports and physical activity, weddings and funerals, and arts and culture events like theatre performances, dance recitals, festivals and concerts.³

This is excellent news, as we continue towards a path of sustained health. As we receive this latest update, we also can recognize that things will not be back to normal as soon as we would like.

In light of today’s announcement, I wanted to provide you with an update. I have previously mentioned that I appointed a task force that is examining our path towards in person worship. *Members of the committee include:*

- The Rector, Parish Wardens: Christine Hoehne, Steve Smith, Don Murray
- The Rev. Canon Dr. Jody Clarke, Pastoral Care and critical response
- The Rev. Bonnie Baird, Pastoral Ministry
- John Gallant, Parish Administrator
- Dr. Katharina Kieser, Physician
- Dr. Julie Wagner, Micromolecular Biologist (Virologist), PhD
- Pam Fisher, Sexton
- John Bogardus, Music Ministry
- Gail Teixeira, Videography, Recording
- John MacDonald, Chair of Finance

Our group has met and is continuing to do so. At this time, the consensus is that we are not in a position to open our doors just yet. There are several things that need to take place before we can simply hold public worship.

³ <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200618004>

First, we are required to create a policy and guideline for worship during a COVID-19 pandemic. Our group is diligently working on this and will update the parish as soon as details are prepared and confirmed. This group will also inform the parish council at its next meeting concerning procedures and preventative measures that will be put in place for everyone's safety. Our plan must also be submitted to the diocese.

As I say this, I want you all to know that the task group and I take the desires to "get back to worship" seriously. We also take into consideration the science and health recommendations that needs to inform how and when we gather again.

I will be writing to the parish sometime next week in a letter specifically concerning what our timeline might look like for gathering in person. I also will touch upon the theological considerations of joining together in a limited fashion.

Let us be of Good Courage!

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 and PEI
Anglican Church of Canada