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TO: Clergy, wardens, lay readers, and lay pastoral visitors
FROM: Bishop Bruce Myers
DATE: Saturday 27 March 2021
RE: Revised COVID-19 restrictions

On March 26 the Quebec government made further changes to its COVID-19 guidelines with respect to places of worship. While the maximum number of people who can attend a regular worship service has been raised to 250 in all alert zones across the province, there are a few important qualifications on this to remember:

- **Those from different households attending worship services must be seated at least two metres apart from each other.** In smaller church buildings, this will mean that the maximum permitted capacity will be far lower than 250.
- For **funerals** and **weddings**, the maximum number of people permitted to attend is **25 in red and orange zones** and **50 in yellow and green zones**. This number does not include clergy, readers, musicians, funeral home staff and any others assisting with the service. In smaller church buildings these numbers may be smaller so as to respect the two-metres rule. The names and contact details of those attending must be kept for the purposes of contact tracing. Families may receive condolences at the church before the funeral service, but no food or beverages may be served afterward.
- **Other previous protocols remain in place.** For example, masks must be worn by members of the congregation throughout the service (procedural masks are mandatory in red and orange zones) and are only to be briefly removed for receiving communion, which is to be brought to individuals in their pews. Congregational and choral singing remains prohibited, although one or two cantors distanced from the congregation may sing during the service.

The public health guidelines now also allow the possibility of some in-person gatherings on a limited scale in places like church halls. Examples of such activities are meetings of support groups, instructional courses, and fellowship groups. In red and orange zones these gatherings can be no larger than 25 people and in yellow and green zones no larger than 50 people. Those gathered must wear masks at all times, respect the two-metres rule, and remain seated. Food or beverages may not be served. Notwithstanding this new provision, I recommend that congregations exercise an abundance of caution before organizing any in-person gatherings outside of worship services. This includes annual vestry meetings, which I have already directed be postponed until this autumn.

As always, Archdeacon Edward Simonton and I are available to try and answer any questions or concerns you may have about this latest stage of reopening.