

The Anglican Parish of St. Francis

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Important Update! Covid-19 Response

My brothers and sisters,

It has been six months since our last Eucharistic celebration at St. Francis Church. All over the world, faith communities have needed to suspend all “in person” liturgies in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 Virus. These have been difficult times and I hope and pray that you will continue to remain diligent as we journey through this global pandemic together.

First of all, I want to thank all the members of our pandemic response team who have been meeting faithfully (sometimes weekly) to ensure the ongoing safety of our church family. Your contributions have been flawless. I would also like to thank those who have been participating each week in our online liturgies. Your ministry has allowed us to stay connected (albeit virtually) in ways that we never dreamed possible. And a special thanks to YOU who are reading this letter for having invited us into your living room each week. Your prayers, your support, your spiritual presence have provided the strength that we need to carry on during these most challenging times. You can find our virtual services on your computer, if you have not already done so, by going to YouTube and searching . . . The Anglican Parish of St. Francis Winnipeg.

My brothers and sisters, six months has been a long time “in exile” – I am reminded of the Psalmist who said “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land” words later made popular by the music group Boney-M, and after careful consideration, in keeping with provincial guidelines (and permission from our Bishop) our pandemic response team has decided to begin the process of reopening our church for public worship. To that end, we have set October 4, 2020, Feast Day of St. Francis, as our target reopening date. Please be aware this could change at any time as we monitor the spread of the virus in our province and city.

As you can imagine, reopening requires a lot of work and preparation and each decision we make will always take into account the safety and wellbeing of our people. Science will always be that which guides us – a very Anglican way for seeing the world. I will not go into the details of what the reopening will look like in this letter, however, the enclosed documents will provide you with a wealth of information regarding our plan. To be sure, some things will look the same such as the Eucharistic prayers, the readings from Holy Scripture, the Prayers of the People, and the observance of the Liturgical year - my goodness, it will soon be Advent!! Some things, however, will look different (we may have to say goodbye to our favourite pew and those glorious hugs we give each other during the exchange of the peace). All that being said there is only one thing which matters (well maybe two or three things): We are all together. We are safe. We are in the presence of Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Over the next few weeks, we will be reaching out to you by telephone to update you on our progress and to answer any questions you may have regarding our plan. Let me reiterate. Things may change at a moment’s notice and the safety of our community will always be our primary focus. In the meantime, we ask for your patience and understanding as there are many details that still need to be worked out. This so called “new reality” is just that, it is new, and we will do all in our power to ensure a smooth reentry into our spiritual life together as a parish family.

This letter comes with my warmest personal wishes. We look forward to seeing you again at our virtual service this coming week and in person, October 4th.

Yours sincerely,
Fr Wayne McIntosh