

Good People of St. Thomas,

As we progress through these days of the pandemic I write to give you a brief update on where we are as a diocese.

The Bishops, in consultation with a group of 16 advisors of clergy and laity in the fields of medicine, public health, social policy, and parish and institutional ministries, has released a plan for going forward. This plan has three phases.

We are currently in Phase I, which will continue us as we are now until *at least* July 1. Therefore, our building continues to be closed to all activities, and no one should be in the building. The exceptions here are that Lori will occasionally be in the office to do necessary work, and Gayle Ferguson, Treasurer, to attend to her work. If you must be in the building, please go alone. Wear a mask (this is required by the Bishop and me). Sanitize anything you touch. Wash your hands. A suitable sanitizer will be visibly available in Pipkin Room and the kitchen. The only door to be used for entry is the entry next to the Parish Hall.

Phase II will **not** begin before *July 1*. At that time, if the Public Health Indicators reflect appropriate declines over a 14-day period, we shall enter Phase II. The Vestry and I are currently working on a plan for St. Thomas within the context of the diocesan plan. It will be distributed to you before July 1. The Vestry and I ask that you please read through it carefully so that we all know what we are doing together and how we are going to be doing it.

The Bishops assume that the first value is the safety and welfare of all of us. As we know, circumstances, knowledge, and possibilities are changing rapidly and from day to day. Plans cannot be etched in stone, which requires of us flexibility, openness, and creativity. No parish or individual will be asked to go faster into re-opening than is comfortable. The basic approach of the diocese is that slower and cautious is better than moving too quickly and without due caution. And it will be so for us at St. Thomas.

The Vestry and I are reviewing now the diocesan plan and will be meeting for three Wednesdays, beginning June 3, to design the plan for St. Thomas. As I am learning, re-opening is much harder and more complex than I would have thought. We can be immensely grateful for the time, energy, and effort that our Bishops, the diocesan staff, and all their consultants are putting into the work of carrying for and leading the diocese in these challenging days of this pandemic. Please keep them all in your prayers.

Let us all continue in our prayers, care for one another in ways appropriate and safe, and remember that our welfare and health depend up us all.

Peace and Blessings.

Bishop William

—

The Right Reverend William O. Gregg, Ph.D.

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