

THE MOST REV. ANNE GERMOND
ARCHBISHOP OF ALGOMA
B.A. (Hons.), B.Th.
bishop@dioceseofalgoma.com

MRS. JANE MESICH
B. Comm., C. A.
DIOCESAN TREASURER
treasurer@dioceseofalgoma.com

THE VEN. DR. D. JAY KOYLE
B.Mus. MDiv., M.A, DMin
DIOCESAN ARCHDEACON
congdevelopment@dioceseofalgoma.com



The Anglican Church of Canada

DIOCESE OF ALGOMA
619 Wellington Street E.
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
P6A 2M6

Phone - (705) 256-5061
Fax - (705) 946-1860

adminassistant@dioceseofalgoma.com

Commemoration of Joseph Butler,
Wednesday June 16, 2021.

Greetings! Algoma Siblings in Christ:

As you know, since we issued the “Roadmap to Reopen the Diocese of Algoma” on June 4 in response to the three-step reopening plan put forward by the Government of Ontario, this latter three-step blueprint was varied, including the loosening of restrictions for numbers participating in religious gatherings.

Yesterday afternoon, Tuesday, June 15, the provincial House of Bishops, Executive Officers, Chancellors, and other clergy and lay representatives from every diocese in Ontario, along with guests from the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, met online with the Rev. Michael Garner. Michael is the epidemiological consultant who has been advising the leadership of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

His presentation was informative and thoughtful, resting his observations and advice, as always, on the latest scientific data, while also keeping an eye on the wellbeing, witness, and ministry of the church in this time.

Michael believes we would be wise to exercise patience and reopen cautiously, even if permitted by government to move things along more quickly. With the new Delta variant on the rise in the province, a variant 60% more contagious than the previous one, he advised we not alter our ‘step one’ to allow the 15% permitted by the provincial government for indoor religious gatherings. Rather, he urged us to make use of outdoor possibilities as much as we can. In his words, “There is no better ventilation than the outdoors.”

What is needed for good coverage against the new Delta variant is 75% of the population to have received two doses of the vaccine. Right now, we remain with

less than 10% of the entire population fully vaccinated.

Given the above considerations, the Archbishop has decided to follow the advice received. Therefore, the original plan circulated on Friday, June 4 will remain in place at the present time.

Our roadmap to reopening does allow outdoor gatherings with Holy Eucharist (distributing bread only), and recording, live streaming or meeting via Zoom for Eucharist followed by distribution of the Reserved Sacrament (bread only). Michael commended our document and, speaking from his own experience, noted taking advantage of this provision is likely to prove a blessing. He described the parking lot of his parish as becoming “a really holy place” as he ministered to each person coming by in their vehicle for 3-4 minutes.

Our protocols over the past year and few months have protected our congregations and communities. We are confident these protocols will continue to serve well, even in the face of the latest, more infectious variant. As Michael observed, however, diligence and caution must be maintained until vaccination rates are much higher, perhaps as many as 60-70% of eligible people fully vaccinated.

When Michael was a field epidemiologist, he and his team would break diseases into person, place, and time. COVID-19 is related to place – spread happens more indoors than out, and more in low ventilation indoor spaces. What the person is doing matters – singing spreads more disease than silent meditation. Likewise, sitting next to someone with COVID for an hour is far riskier than passing them in the hallway.

So let us reopen with patience and caution. Let us continue the best practices we have followed throughout the pandemic. Encourage people, if they are able to do so, to get vaccinated as early as possible. While the weather allows, let us make use of outdoor opportunities to gather in appropriate numbers with physical distancing.

If you have any questions, please feel free to be in touch with me.

Thank you all for your faithfulness throughout this time of pandemic.

In Christ,



The Ven. Dr. Jay Koyle,
Diocesan Archdeacon and Executive Officer