



March 16, 2021

To the Clergy, Lay Leaders, Supervisors and Pastoral Charges in Regina, Belle Plaine, Pense, Grand Coulee, Lumsden Beach, Regina Beach, Craven, Lumsden, Edenwold, Pilot Butte, White City, Balgonie, Kronau, Davin, Gray and Riceton:

Friends, as you are well aware the number of COVID-19 cases in Regina are at a high level and the number of infections due to the UK Variant of the virus is increasing at a fast rate. This variant of the COVID-19 virus is very contagious and is easily transmitted, which is why the numbers are growing so quickly in the city.

Due to this increasing number of variant infections, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Government has announced a change in the health mandate for the city of Regina and the surrounding areas named above. The changes particularly affect the size of allowable gatherings for worship. I have included the updated recommendations and restrictions below in italics and bold.

There is an elevated risk of COVID-19 in Regina due to community transmission of variants of concern.

It is recommended that Regina and area residents - particularly those over age 50 - should not consider increasing their household bubbles to include 2-3 households up to 10 people. They should consider remaining with their current household only.

*While worship services throughout the province will be able to expand to 30 per cent of capacity or 150 people, whichever is the lesser number starting March 19, **places of worship in Regina and adjacent communities will remain at the current capacity level which is a maximum of 30 individuals, with required physical distancing and masking guidelines. This will remain in effect until April 5, 2021 and will be evaluated at that time.***

All residents of Regina, those who work in Regina and area and those who are planning travel to the region, are asked to abide by all best personal protective measures at this time to avoid further restrictions. Minimize the risk in the city and throughout the region.

- *Wear your mask in all public places including all workplaces*



- *Wash non-medical masks daily*
- *Maintain physical distancing*
- *Wash your hands frequently*
- *Reduce activities outside of your home. Order take-out or curbside pick-up. If you are able to work from home, work from home at this time.*
- ***Avoid all unnecessary travel to and from Regina***

If you have any symptoms, stay home and arrange for a COVID-19 test. If anyone in your home has symptoms, the entire household should remain home until the test results are known. Testing information is available at www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/testing-information.

At the latest gathering of the Faith Leaders task group and the Business Response team, it was made clear that Dr. Shahab will be watching the case numbers in Regina daily and will make changes to the restrictions as the situation requires.

Siblings in faith, my prayer for you right now is to make choices that protect your health and the health of your community. While we haven't been given new restrictions, merely words of caution, I would encourage you to take those words of caution to heart. Yes, we were all looking forward to gathering for Easter, maybe in church with our faith community or with family around the supper table. Please don't be tempted to worship at another church in another town or city that is allowed larger gatherings. Please don't travel outside of your community unless absolutely necessary. If we all continue to be cautious, compassionate and willing to make sacrifices, we will keep these variants from travelling all over the province.

Take heart, friends. Vaccine line ups in Regina are long which means people are making the choice to get the shot. Easter will come, the tomb will open, and we will be reminded that resurrection is possible, even in the hardest of times. Keep your hearts open to the myriad of ways Easter hope is made manifest in our lives. And continue to know that you are not alone... God and this regional community of faith surrounds you.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Tricia Gerhard

Chair, Living Skies Regional Council Executive.