



St. Elizabeth's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RIDGEWOOD

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Dear Friends,

I wrote to you last week to announce adjustments to our in-person service schedule. At the end of the letter, I said that we would suspend in-person worship services if the Bergen County COVID-19 Risk Level moved from ORANGE to RED, signaling that an outbreak is “active or imminent”. I’m sorry to say that move happened on Sunday. Additionally, Governor Phil Murphy has again tightened restrictions on indoor gatherings. Although houses of worship are exempt from those new restrictions, we will temporarily suspend all in-person services at St. Elizabeth’s out of an abundance of caution. We will transition back to being fully online for worship until the COVID-19 Risk Level is downgraded to at least the ORANGE level.

I sensed this was coming this past Sunday morning, and I found myself getting choked up as I was preparing to lead worship. It was a like a small homecoming in September when we welcomed parishioners back into the building for in-person services. I’ve been hoping and praying that we would not need to suspend in-person worship again, but I believe this is the right right thing to do. As I’ve said many times before, I’m committed to keeping everyone who comes into our building safe. It’s clear that is becoming more difficult to do as this pandemic again worsens.

The good news (and there is always good news—this is the Church, after all) is that a COVID-19 vaccine seems to be forthcoming. This isn’t over yet, but at least we are starting to get glimpses of the light thanks to the brilliant women and men who work in the medical research

field. Please keep these folks in your prayers as they do their good work, and please continue to pray for all doctors, nurses, teachers, and other frontline workers.

Jesus tells us that one of the greatest commandments is to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22.39). That's our calling as Christians. Some ways we can show that love to others is by wearing our masks, keeping our distance, and by being safe and smart about how and with whom we gather. As we approach the holiday season, I hope you will join me in redoubling your efforts to keep yourselves and those around you well.

You're in my prayers each and every day. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions or if I can assist you in some way. I miss you all.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy" with a small plus sign to the right.

The Rev. Andy Olivo,
Rector