



The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
Office of the Bishop

Dear Clergy,

It was good seeing your faces on our Zoom meeting Tuesday morning. I believe we are getting the hang of things when it comes to online meetings. My hope is that soon we will be able to gather together in one room without fear. I look forward to that day.

In the meantime, I want to address some of the issues raised in our meeting. The number one goal is to be safe when we do gather. This means following the guidelines issued by the Governor and the medical community. However, even though the Governor has allowed churches to gather indoors at 25% occupancy, the Diocese of Louisiana will not. My reasoning is based squarely in the safety of our clergy and congregations. Please continue using electronic meetings and worship services. Mayor Cantrell refers to this as, "Safest at Home" during the Phase 1 of re-entry. You may also consider planning outside services (beginning May 24) following the guidelines set by the State Fire Marshall, the office of the governor and your local parish officials. I will revisit this decision after the governor issues his next set of guidelines the first week of June. We will communicate this clearly in our weekly meetings.

I realize there are some denominations that will begin worshipping indoors very soon and that some of you may be encouraged by your parishioners to follow suit. We will not. We are still in conversation with qualified health professionals about how to do this safely. In addition, I do not want to put any of you in the position of having to "police" your neighbors to control those who wish to attend.

My friends, let us continue to be diligent in following guidelines and to remember our safety is dependent upon our awareness of one another. You have conducted yourself extremely well in learning new ways to communicate and worship the Lord. Hold fast to that which is good. I am grateful for your leadership.

As always, please call if you have any questions.

The Rt. Rev. Morris K. Thompson, Jr.
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana