

July 3, 2020

Friends,

At a press conference yesterday afternoon New Mexico Governor Lujan-Grisham announced that New Mexico is maintaining current occupancy limits for Houses of Worship at this time. She also announced that state mask-wearing orders would be enforced by a fine of up to \$100, and a 14-day quarantine will be in effect for all out of state travelers, regardless of how they arrived in New Mexico.

Should cases in New Mexico continue to increase over the next 14 days she is prepared to renew mandatory closures of many recently opened businesses, including Houses of Worship. She will announce the state's new order on July 15th.

Earlier in the week Texas Governor Abbott announced measures to reverse the opening of bars and reduce the capacity of dine-in restaurants due to the record-breaking transmission rates in the State of Texas, and public mask-wearing ordinances remain in effect in El Paso County.

While there is no official order from Governor Lujan-Grisham or from Governor Abbott, the facts surrounding the increased spread of COVID-19 in New Mexico and Far West Texas require the close attention of all of our Clergy, Vestries, and Bishop's Committees.

We are encouraging every congregation to contact their local public health officials directly, to get the most recent data around COVID spread in your county, and to hear their recommendation for holding public worship at this time.

If you are located in Jeff Davis County, Praesidio County, Brewster County, Pecos County, El Paso County, Dona Ana County, Otero County, Eddy County, Lea County, Bernalillo, or Valencia County- Based on the clarity of data surrounding current transmission rates of COVID-19 we are strongly recommending that you consider returning to your Phase I ministry plan and cease public worship until transmission rates in your county are in decline.

As Jesus shows us in the parable of the Good Samaritan we are called to care for our neighbors in profound ways, and to put the needs of the vulnerable above our own. In this moment we must take responsibility for each other's well-being and know that whatever we do for the health and safety of our neighbors we do for Jesus and because he calls us to.

+Michael
The Rt Rev Michael B Hunn
Bishop
The Diocese of the Rio Grande