



# THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

## STANDING COMMITTEE

July 16, 2020

Dear Faithful People of the Diocese of South Carolina,

As cases continue to spike across the state of South Carolina, the Standing Committee would like to thank the people and congregations of the diocese for the crucial role you, as the Church, have been playing in our communities during this time of pandemic. Our actions, everything from how we are deciding to conduct worship to the faithful practicing of new norms like social distancing and the wearing of masks, are a sign to a suffering world that we love God and our neighbor.

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, the Standing Committee offered the following recommendations:

1. Continue online services as the primary means of worship.
2. If after developing a plan and assessing the current state of the virus in their region, congregations have discerned that they are adequately prepared to safely regather for in-person worship (either outdoors or indoors), they are to proceed with great caution and care in doing so.
3. Wherever possible, it is recommended that meetings, services, and other in-person gatherings are held outdoors, while still adhering to proper social distancing protocols (including the wearing of masks).

These remain our recommendations. **However, in light of the current statistics in the state of South Carolina, the Standing Committee strongly urges that we, the people and congregations of our diocese, take time to regroup and reassess based on the state of the virus in our respective regions. The process of regrouping and reassessing may be the catalyst for the creation of a different opportunity for worship, adoption of new practices to promote an even safer worship environment, or a decision to take a step back and continue with only online services for a time. We support you fully in making the decision that is right for your congregation.**

Our diocese—our people and congregations—will continually strive to follow the advice of public health experts and best practices in planning the activities and worship of our diocese.

We remain inspired by the creativity and ingenuity of the congregations of this diocese during these journey days. We pray that this will continue in the weeks and months ahead, with best practices in mind.

We all share the high calling of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to a world in desperate need. Right now this is particularly challenging. The Church must not grow weary of communicating and embodying the hope that is within us. However challenging our circumstances may be, we are called to be steadfast harbingers of that hope, and for that hope to continue to be reflected in our actions.

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Pray with the Church: That we may not grow weary of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, that we may continue to serve as a beacon of hope to a suffering world, and that we may continue to reflect that hope in our actions.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, I am faithfully yours,

The Reverend Canon Caleb J. Lee  
President of the Standing Committee