



# THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

January 20, 2022

Dear faithful people of the Diocese of South Carolina,

As we approach the end of our second year living through this COVID-19 pandemic, the overwhelming surge of the highly contagious Omicron variant has caused an alarming rate of transmission in communities throughout South Carolina and the nation. Just as we were beginning to return to something closer to normal toward the end of last year, we now find ourselves returning to the protocols that help slow the spread, including strict masking, social distancing, and re-evaluating the necessity of in-person events. As we continue to live with this reality, I am mindful that we are all weary of restrictions in our daily lives, yet these precautions are a vitally important means by which we love one another.

[The protocols I shared with you in December](#) remain in place. Should a congregation choose to worship virtually while the current spike in cases continues, know that you have my full support in making that decision. For congregations that continue to worship in person, I want to emphasize that I have a firm expectation that all of those attending worship and in-person events be vaccinated and masked when indoors. I also strongly encourage you to hold virtual meetings and events in lieu of in-person events whenever possible. I, along with the Standing Committee, remain in regular contact with our medical advisors, keeping the safety and health of all as our first priority. While we hope that we will soon see a leveling and decline of the rate of transmission, we are not there yet. We must remain vigilant and cautious to keep people safe.

For specific information about your county, please [see this link](#). Keep in mind that the CDC initially recommended indoor gatherings only when the positive test rate fell below five percent. Over the past week, the positive test rate for the state has been more than 30 percent.

I remain grateful for your prayers and patience, and especially for your care for others, as God calls us to do. We will get through this pandemic together.

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley  
Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina