



March 16, 2021  
Clergy Webinar

## **Bishop Goff's Remarks**

Welcome

Our focus today is on marking the anniversary of the week when everything changed due to the Pandemic - one year ago. We will spend time in prayer together in [A Liturgy of Loss, Learning and Longing](#).

We begin, however, with some announcements and a brief Q and A.

### **Search Committee Applications**

You will have seen by now the invitation from the Standing Committee for [applicants for the Search Committee](#) for the next Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Virginia. Applications are available in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. Please note that those are due by March 31.

### **Staff Changes**

You will also have seen the announcement last Friday that the Rev. Dr. Mary Thorpe has retired from her position as Canon to the Ordinary, effective on Friday. I am grateful to Mary for her support and leadership in the role of Canon for the past two years, and for her work in transitions before that. She has been my right hand in a number of ways. I wish her every blessing in whatever adventures lie ahead for her.

The Leadership Team of the Diocesan Staff and I are exploring a couple of models and options for staffing as we go forward together. During this time, and well beyond, the work for which we looked to Mary will continue. The Rev. Sarah Brockenbrough, our Minister for Transitions, will continue her solid work of ushering clergy and congregations through transitions. Bishop Brooke-Davidson will engage all ministries and activities that are related to congregational development. I will oversee all pandemic and re-gathering efforts. Our staff is small, and each member is strong, talented and committed. They and I remain strong and committed in service to the wider diocese in the days ahead.

Some other news regarding staffing: Last month, Vicky Bickel, assistant in the Offices of Transition and Formation, retired. This week I joyfully announce that Vicky will continue her work with us on a part-time basis. With this arrangement, Vicky gets to begin to live into her retirement and we get to benefit from her wisdom, competence and experience.

### **Worship and the Pandemic**

According to the [Dashboard](#) of the Brown School of Public Health that is linked to our website, the rate of new infections per 100,000 persons on a seven-day rolling average continue to decline in some counties of our diocese. Today, only three counties and the city of Harrisonburg are in the red. Seven counties are in the yellow. The rest are in the orange zone. Those in the yellow may regather indoors for worship according to the plan they submitted and that was approved by our Regathering Task Force. Those in the orange may regather outdoors

according to the plan they submitted. Those in the red must wait a while longer until numbers decline.

Please continue to track the statistics in your county as you plan worship, especially for Holy Week and Easter. We won't provide you a spreadsheet that tracks the infection rate, as we did in the past. You can track it yourself. If you have not yet thought through and submitted your plan for worship, please do so. The [guidelines](#) are posted on the diocesan website. If you have submitted a plan for outdoor worship and your county is in the orange zone, you may do outdoor worship; you don't need to seek any additional permissions. If you have submitted a plan for indoor worship, have received permission and your county is in the yellow zone, you may regather indoors; you don't need to seek any additional permissions.

Please, all of us, let's take great care not to let down our guard now. We have come so far. There is light at the end of this long tunnel. We must continue to be vigilant for the sake of our own health and the health of others, particularly the most vulnerable, as we walk into that light. Let's beware of a possible spring break surge.

#### **Q & A**

We'll now take 10 minutes of questions. Please post your questions in Q and A. We will update the [one-page summary](#) on our website based on your current questions. If we don't have time to answer your question, you will be able to find your answer there. If your question is specific to your context, please send it to me at [bishopsoffice@thediocese.net](mailto:bishopsoffice@thediocese.net). We will send out a summary of this meeting tomorrow, as is our custom. It will include most of the text of our [Liturgy of Loss, Learning and Longing](#).