

Taihape Anglican Parish,
Huia St, Taihape



Letter from Rev. Tracey Peters

3 December 2021

As you all know by now, we are in the traffic light system of living in a COVID time. We in this area are in the Red light system which affects how we “do” church.

From this Sunday, 5 Dec onwards, only those fully vaccinated will be able to attend the 9:30 am service. You will need to show your vaccine passport – either on your phone, or a hard copy at the door.

This is the approach of all Anglican Churches in New Zealand, at the request of the Tikanga Pakeha Bishops. This is their Pastoral message

“Out of a deep love for the church and the people we serve, we have sought to approach the next stage of our nation’s response to this world-wide health emergency in a way that reflects two key agreements in common:

1. The normative position for worship, events and gatherings, is that they will be fully-vaccinated. In other words, vaccine certificates will be required to attend services of worship, events and gatherings. This fully vaccinated approach, as the norm, reflects the best and most current health advice available to us, as we seek to do all that we can to minimise the risk of anyone becoming infected with Covid-19.

2. We have a pastoral responsibility for the care of all people. This responsibility is to both vaccinated and non-vaccinated, but particularly to the most vulnerable. This care includes those who may not be able to worship with us because they have chosen not to be vaccinated. It also includes those who are in quarantine after exposure to infected people and are awaiting test results. Such pastoral responsibility also includes those who are ill, or those who are choosing to limit their potential exposure to infection because of their level of vulnerability or the level of vulnerability to members of their households. We are committed to supporting local Churches in finding ways to minister to all.

As bishops, we are committed to constantly reviewing these principles, and the protocols and policies that are being established in each Diocese regularly, to ensure that we continue to reflect the greatest level of care possible.

As we continue to navigate this season together, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank and honour all those who lead and serve within our church in Christ’s name and who work for the coming of Christ’s Kingdom. We continue to faithfully hold each other before God in prayer.

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Yours in Christ,

*Bishop Ross Bay
Bishop Steven Benford
Bishop Peter Carrell*

*Bishop Justin Duckworth
Bishop Andrew Hedge
Bishop Steve Maina
Bishop Philip Richardson
Bishop Eleanor Sanderson*

I know that this is, and will be, deeply distressing to many, it seems to be the opposite of what "Church" is about. But 'Church', actually, is the Body of Christ caring for each other everywhere, and not just about a Sunday service. My team and I, as part of the local Anglican body, will do all we can to keep being 'as Christ', to you all, whatever your situation.

For those able to attend Church, as well as the mandatory passport check, we will all be back to wearing masks, from this Sunday. As we've become accustomed to keep signing in on entry, sanitise your hands, the offering plate won't be passed around, and only the wafer for communion.

We can still sing - behind masks, preferably, and we can still have a cuppa afterwards, trying to keep a meter space between each other.

Because of the meter spacing ruling, I have had to make the decision to cancel the Moawhango and Kawhatau carol services. As many of you know, the services are usually very well attended, with very full churches. Rather than turning people away because we have reached capacity, we won't be holding these carol services this year

I'm not sure yet about the carol service at Awastone, will keep you posted.

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day services will go ahead.

Please feel free to ring me at any time. 0274-97-3438 or 388-1420.

This is a very divisive situation we find ourselves in, and we, as Christians, are called to be bridge builders and not wall builders. May we not be drawn to arguments with each other about vaccination. May we seek to see, speak and share words and actions of faith, hope and love with one another.

We are in the season of Advent, the time when we prepare ourselves once again for the coming of Immanuel, God with us, footstep after Jesus, Worshiping together in church is a blessing, but it is not be the be-all and end-all of what it is to be a follower of Christ. Let us keep Jesus at our centre, not COVID.

May you each know God's peace, hope, joy and love this Advent season

Rev Tracey.