



The Right Reverend Dr Mark Short Diocesan Bishop

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Dear sisters and brothers,

Pastoral Letter - Pentecost

We write on this Day of Pentecost to give thanks for the work of God's Spirit in our midst as we have responded to the challenges of COVID-19. Along with the impact on health and economic well-being you have experienced disruption to everyday life including your ability to gather together for worship. Yet across our Diocese you have responded with Spirit-inspired generosity and creativity as you have cared for neighbours and found new ways to connect with each other.

On Pentecost we are reminded that God has always been the great disruptor of the status quo. As the Apostle Peter draws on the words of the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17-21 we see three dimensions of the Spirit's disruptive work.

- . First, there is *disruption to established hierarchies*. From now on anyone, male and female, young and old, slave and free, can prophesy as they speak God's message.
- . Second, there is *disruption to the order of creation*. From now on the very elements of earth and sky are being called to witness to the acts of God.
- . Third, there is *disruption to individual destinies*. From now on everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved from the judgment that is coming on this present age.

Even as we long for a return to something like business as usual, we encourage you to look for signs of God's work in the midst of our challenges. God has seeded new ministries, established new connections with our communities and opened up new ways of being church. There is much we can learn from and carry with us in the days ahead.

We would also ask you to pray for the work of God's Spirit among us as we negotiate the gradual lifting of restrictions on gathered worship. The fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) will enable us to make this journey in way that honours the Lord Jesus. We look forward to making that journey with you.

May the risen and ascended Lord Jesus continue to pour God's Spirit upon God's people!

Bishop Mark, Bishop Carol and Bishop Stephen
28 May 2020