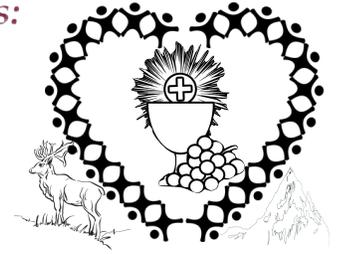


*Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:
Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9am (see below).

Dear All,

I write this with apologies, because most of this e-mail is about covid and I am sure that everyone has heard as much as they want to hear about it, but it is a reality in our society and so it is an issue that has to be looked at in the parish.

But before that, I would just say that on Tuesday I joined Bishop Mark, my bishop in England, and my fellow priests of my home diocese for our Christ Mass. While most of the priests were, like myself, joining in remotely, it was still good to be part of this. Before the Mass Bp. Mark sent out a letter saying how saddened he was that all the priests couldn't gather in one place for this important event in our annual calendar; so I replied that I was so please that, for the first time since I have been in Canada, I was able to join them – *even remotely* – for this event. I am sure that my enjoyment didn't equal the disappointment of others who couldn't attend, but among the hardship that this pandemic is forcing on all of us, there are some small blessings that should not be overlooked.

Covid

As I listen to the news from different parts of the world, it is clear that here in the Elk Valley we have got off very lightly with the covid pandemic. Also it is clear that a 'second wave' is hitting many places. The reality is that it is only a matter of time before we get a number of cases in our valley. The likelihood is that we won't see this coming, so it is really important that before it happens we follow the protocols of washing hands, wearing face masks and keeping one's distance.

My fear is obviously – *first and foremost* – that some of our older or more vulnerable people will be exposed to the virus. So for them we should all do what we can to help them keep safe. But on the more day-to-day level, it is only a matter of time until someone in our social circle gets a positive covid test and we are asked to self-isolate for fourteen days. If you are asked to self-isolate, please do this rigorously – see it as your way of caring for others. This will be particularly hard if you have no symptoms, or if it is the second or third time you have been asked to self-isolate, but it is needed for the good of all.

While I am not more important than anyone else, if I have to self-isolate for fourteen days then there will be two weekends when we won't be able to have a public Mass and there won't be any distribution of Communion after Mass. It will also mean a two week period when we won't be able to have any funerals,

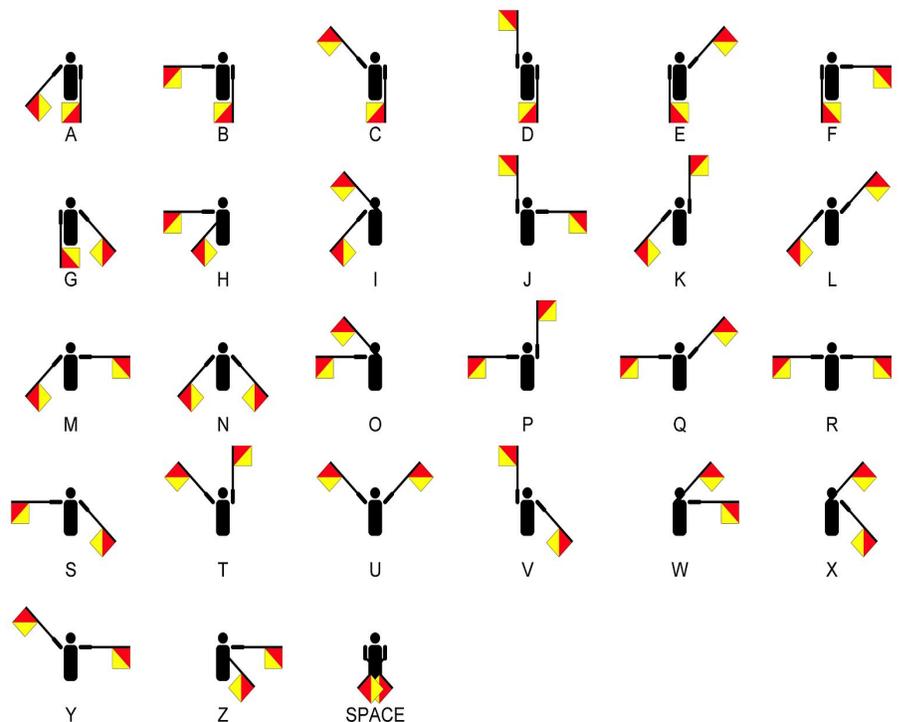
anointing of the sick or any sacraments. I so much don't want this to happen. So as this pandemic becomes more present to us in the Valley, I will withdraw slightly and really try not just to keep two-metres distance from others but as much space as is practical. And please understand that I will be doing this because I want continuity in the life of the parish with the sacraments available. I do believe that this covid situation will get a lot worse before it gets better – in that sense, I think we are 'on borrowed time'.

So I do ask everyone to be sensitive to this issue. Please don't worry about being nice, rather be safe! Think of the most vulnerable and make sure you are masked with clean hands and at a distance. And because – *for the sake of the parish* – I desperately don't want to have to go into self-isolation, please be respectful and help me to keep my distance from you.

We all wish that somehow we could be immune from this illness and so be close to people again and show our friendship and love as we normally do, but we can't. So until a vaccine is produced, for love of others and for love of the sacraments, please help us all to keep safe.

Two Metres

I would just remind everyone, myself included, that two metres is not the *maximum* distance at which we can interrelate with people, it is a *minimum*. And it is not that at two metres we are one-hundred-percent safe, it is just that the risk is significantly lessened at this distance, and at three metres it is reduced even more.



And just in case it helps, here is a semaphore chart so you can communicate from even further away!

Protocols While in Church

Currently we are not meant to be giving out pieces of paper, but early in the week I did reproduce a number of copies of the protocols that we are asked to observe while in church. If you would like a copy of these, please take one. To avoid repeated touching by multiple people, these won't be handed to you, and if you pick one up to look at it, please take it away with you – *please don't* put it back on the table.

Zoom

At the time of writing (Wednesday) we haven't heard any more from Zoom about the change to signing on procedures that they previously mentioned, so we carry on with the same link for a bit longer, but it might change next week as we go into October. Therefore next week please double check the link. I am sure that Zoom will let us know and all will be well.

And Finally

As mentioned last week, the weather is changing. Thankfully we had a good dump of rain this week; let's hope that this also fell on the areas effected by the wildfires. Certainly it will help restore a lot of the green in our valley and reduce our local fire risk. But it also means that we need to wrap up to stay warm. We are still asked to keep our doors open as much as practicable so we get a good movement of air through our churches, but this means we will get a good movement of *cool* air through our churches! So please dress appropriately.

With many thanks, Fr. David

Link to Sunday Mass

To get the link to our 9am Sunday morning Mass please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@holyfamilyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Please note that in September Zoom are mandating that we use "passcodes" for our broadcasts, so that will need a Meeting ID and a Passcode to log in. Hopefully we will still be able to provide you via e-mail with a 'clickable' link that contains both of these.
