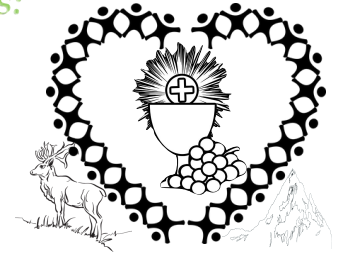


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

10th/11th July

Dear All,

For me the last week has felt like more than seven days; each day has seemed to have had so much in it, yet I am not sure that I have a lot to show for the week! Now I should say that a mighty hail storm counts among the things that have filled part of one of the days – but it was a beauty! And as beautiful as the power of the storm was the still misty haze that was left after it (picture above).



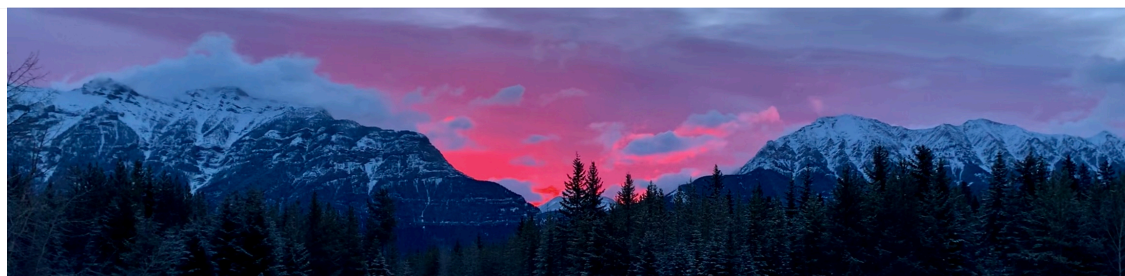
Top: after the hail storm on Wednesday.

Bottom: Easter morning, 9th April, and fire in the sky.

During July and August I usually try to do some reading or study, or at least, something that I normally don't get time to do. And this week I have got off to a good start. Yet with a burial (or 'entombment') and a baptism my reading had to fit in around the normal weekly tasks. At least I could do a lot of this study from my camper in the middle of nowhere, which was so good. As I write this mid-week, on a hot evening with thunder in the distance, I have just sat for an hour high up in the mountains where there was no sounds except those produced by the wilderness and the sky; God seemed to be so close that I just wanted to cry. And while the hour had started with psalms from my prayer book, really it had to end with a good blast of John Denver's 'Rocky Mountain High', which includes the words,

"Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it raining fire in the sky.

The shadow from the starlight is softer than a lullaby... Rocky Mountain high."



Deacon Stephen

It is with this busyness in mind that once again I can say how grateful I am to Deacon Stephen to be joining us this weekend and taking on the mantle of being the preacher. I am so pleased that he is taking on the passage of the Gospel that says, *“take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no haversack, no coppers for your purse”*, because I can tell you, for my journeys into the bush my little camper is laden down with all these things and a lot more. This will leave me next weekend to deal with the much more comforting words of Jesus when he said to his disciples, *“You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while.”* Now that I can do!

Dawson’s Presentation

At the end of our Sunday morning Mass, Dawson, our youngster who regularly serves in Sparwood, will be receiving a presentation from the Knights. I know nothing more, so we will have to wait to see what that is all about.

Future of the Zoom Broadcasts

My sincere hope is that we will be able to continue broadcasting our Masses. We will see what the demand is for this, but I think that these Masses have a real value to some, even as we return to normal.

One young Mum said to me that before Covid if one of her kids wasn’t feeling too good on a Sunday morning, then she wouldn’t want to bring them to church. And if a kid stayed home then one of the parents had to stay at home as well, and if a parent and one of the kids is staying home then the other kids also wanted to stay at

home, and if they stayed, inevitably, the other parent would also stay at home, so the whole family would miss Mass. But she said, now the Mass is broadcast we can still feel part of it. Then many others have related situations that are not specific to Covid where they have been able to join us for Mass when previously, for whatever reason, they wouldn’t have been able to be at church.

So my hope is that our Zoom broadcasts won’t be a replacement for the desire to be at church, but at least be a second option if getting to church is not possible.

While I have been a bit remiss lately, I do normally try to structure my sermons so that they follow on from each other, so hopefully if people do have to miss a Sunday, then the thread of the ideas I explore in the sermons can still be followed.

One lady wrote to me this week and said that she was now back to Mass at her local parish so wouldn’t be joining us on Zoom. This is great and I am really pleased, but in reply I did point out that if any week she couldn’t get to church, hopefully we will still be here broadcasting. *(Or, of course, she might decide that she wants to go to church twice on a Sunday!)*



Our churches are now open *without* a limit on numbers.
But Covid is still in the population – so caution is needed!



Our Next Stage of Reopening

The Bishop's office has written to us and have shared what we should do during this next phase of reopening. Stated below are the rough guidelines we will be following:

For Those Attending Church

- If you are ill – **Stay at Home;**
- Please respect one another's personal space, other's might want more space than you require, please let them have it!
- Masks can be worn, but if you are fully vaccinated you are also welcome to take your mask off while seated during the service;
- For those who are not yet fully vaccinated, please wear a mask all the time;
- Please continue to sanitise your hands;
- If you wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, please only come forward after everyone else has received Communion;
- At the 'Sign of Peace', please use a gesture other than a handshake for those not in your household;
- Mass can return to normal with the Mass concluding in the usual way with the blessing, but please don't 'bunch' as you leave the church.

You might also like to note that:

- No contact tracing is needed;
- Holy Water fonts are to remain empty;
- We will try to ensure good fresh air circulation;
- The Chalice will not be shared at this time;
- We will review how we take the collection.

A Little Story

Way before Covid and our current focus on not infecting others, I was in a parish where there was a lady who had a very serious immunity disorder. She loved coming to Mass but she had to be so careful because if someone had a cold they could so easily pass this on and then she would be seriously ill.

So she would come to Mass and try to avoid close contact with anyone, but people would always want to say, "So-and-so, it is so lovely to see you, let me give you a

hug.” And despite her asking people not to and explaining that she had an immunity disorder, people would still insist on coming up to her and touching her or at least, coming so close that she couldn’t avoid breathing some of their breath.

Not wanting to make a fuss but also wanting to be at church, she would arrive just after Mass had started, thus missing most people who might be at the door.

Then came the sign of peace, and this was a real nightmare for her. She would sit as far away from everyone as she could and then wave at the sign of peace, but people would still come up to her and say, “Oh, I must offer you a proper sign of peace” and they would grab her hand. This got so bad that she would arrive late, during the ‘Our Father’ she would slip out and go and hide in the toilets, come back in for Communion and then she would make sure she left ahead of me. She came to me to explain and apologise for what she thought I might be interpreting as rudeness, and she said that she hated arriving late and having to go and hide during Mass but because of her health issues it was a necessity.

Now all these people who were coming up to her were doing what they did out of kindness; but an unthought-out kindness can be really difficult for someone else.

Now as we move out of Covid there might be many who will want to come to Mass (both here in the Valley and in every other parish), but yet feel very vulnerable at the same time. So this lady’s plea is, ‘Before you try to be kind to someone, be sensitive, otherwise your kindness might not be kind at all.’ So in the guidelines above it says, *“Please respect one another’s personal space; other’s might want more space than you require, please let them have it!”* Please, please, please don’t say, “I have been double vaccinated so I am going to give you a big hug” unless you are absolutely sure that the person receiving it is completely happy with you doing this. Also remember that it is very difficult to say, “I am sorry, no, I don’t want a hug from you” or “I don’t want you close to me”, so don’t embarrass people and don’t put them in an awkward situation; rather err on the side of caution and keep your distance, and most particularly, please avoid close contact with people unless you know for certain that they have no issues with you being less than two metres from them.

And Finally...

Much of this week was very hot, but with those good storms, the streams were full of cool, fresh water, and Thumper was going to enjoy a drink during a lovely long walk.

With prayers,

Fr. David @ Thumper



Zoom Links

Link to Weekend Masses

To get the link to our two weekend Masses 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

Audio Only

So don't forget, if you are off camping and your data plan does not allow you to watch Sunday Mass on Zoom without using up all of your month's data in one go, then you can always call in and listen. Again, e-mail the office for the link for this.

Chat:

Feel free to greet people via the chat when you join our broadcast, and if you are praying for anything particular, do share this with others on the Chat.

Hopefully our "1A - Chat (Co-Host)" will pick this up and pass it on to me.

If you don't want everyone to see your message you can send your message directly to "1A - Chat" and it will remain private.

Waiting Room:

Please note when you log on you will be put in a "waiting room".

Hopefully as soon as we see you waiting we will let you in.

If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait;

the co-host or myself will be with you as quickly as we can.

Everyone still needs to be careful:

Even having a Covid vaccination doesn't prevent you carrying Covid and giving it to others! Thus if you are vaccinated, please don't say, "I'm okay, I have had the jab, so I can go back to what we used to do before; I can shake hands and be close to people." This might be given as a gesture of love and kindness, but the virus is still about. ***Everyone still needs to be careful.***

