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- Where are we going?
  - What models of church might help us think about a post-pandemic world?

# Looking to the future

- Diverging views about when to return to in-person worship
  - “We consider there to be, now, no scientific justification for the wholesale suspension of public worship.” (Religious leaders in England in November)
  - Compare with summer suspension of in-person worship in Ontario dioceses and Diocese of Montreal
- What are the implications of embracing non-Eucharistic worship?
  - Helpfully transitioning to a church with fewer clergy?
  - Overturning what truly constitutes the church?
  - Embracing other models of worship? Sermon, prayers, Daily Office, Bible study

# Looking to the future: mixed economy

- “Mixed economy” of church
  - Phrase initially used in reference to Fresh Expressions movement: ministry is mixture of traditional parish ministry and new forms of church, such as Messy Church
- What does the mixed economy of church look like after pandemic?
  - Continued use of online and in-person modes?
  - Worshipping on days other than Sunday?
  - Reclaiming the church calendar: feasting on Holy Days akin to in-person worship?
- Resource and technology constraints a factor

# Looking to the future

- Creative possibilities
  - Online worship plus drive-through Eucharist
  - Outdoor worship
- Formation for discipleship
  - Embrace of technology opens up (some) new ways for education and closes down others
- From maintenance to mission
  - How is your mixed economy attentive to and open to those seeking church?

# Looking to the future: institutional change

- “We’re floating along a 75% cushion from Justin Trudeau right now but it’s not going to be pretty when that cushion is gone.”
- Church was already forecasting steep numerical decline in membership in coming generation
- Pandemic will bring forward institutional change in church: What form will that take?
  - Fewer clergy, fewer church buildings, fewer dioceses
  - Greater geographic spread of churches made possible by technology
- Re-opening church is work of whole church community, not just clergy and lay leadership—so is the future of the church
  - Whole church communities need to decide what future they are being called to

# The pandemic and risk

- Pandemic has made many of us newly aware of risk—and its avoidance
- Risk: “a situation involving exposure to danger”
- How do we balance risk and reward?
  - Schools: reward of in-person education for students vs. risk of greater viral transmission
- Calculated risks: How do we minimize (but not eliminate) risk so as to maximize reward?

# The church and risk

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- “The church is a safe place to take risks.” –Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby
- In the supportive context of the body of Christ, the church is a place where trying new things (and failing) is possible and encouraged



# Questions for discussion

- When you think about the future, what are the risks that you think your church community is being called to take?