

**December 2020**

## **RESTRAINED HOLIDAY SEASON MAKES HAPPY NEW YEAR POSSIBLE**

**By Mayor Bill Beamish**

As the holiday season begins, it's a simple fact that this year's celebrations are going to be far from usual. The biggest change, obviously, is the restriction on how many people we can see in person. Currently, Dr Bonnie Henry is asking everyone to limit their contact to those within their household and to forego all unnecessary travel. This means a normally jam-packed social calendar can be looking very sparse indeed.

While eliminating time spent with friends and family is especially difficult at this time of year, we must remember why we are making this sacrifice – and how successful our collective efforts to protect each other have been so far.

In early December, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) reported that the Lower Sunshine Coast recorded just 48 confirmed cases of COVID-19 between January 15 and November 27, 2020 – the lowest rate of all local health areas in the VCH region. Additionally, there have been no outbreaks at Sunshine Coast long-term care facilities.

Most of us are following public health guidelines to reduce social contact, maintain a 2-metre distance from one another, wash our hands frequently and mask up when in public indoor spaces – and our efforts are working. Let's not start bending the rules now.

Instead, I suggest we focus on the holiday delights that remain. Many people put up their Christmas lights earlier than usual, to literally brighten our community. Holiday foods still bring pleasure. And we may still safely connect with loved ones by phone, on line, or by mailing a greeting card (an old-fashioned but always appreciated tradition.)

Let's also find joy by sharing what we can with those in need. Sunshine Coast Community Services is one local non-profit that offers numerous ways to give back to our community (all year round). Contact them by email at [sccsreception@sccss.ca](mailto:sccsreception@sccss.ca) or by phone at 604-885-5881.

While shopping locally, let's keep frontline workers top of mind. These are the folks who show up at their jobs, no matter the risk, so that the rest of us can continue to access essential goods and services. This season, let's honour them by strictly following current public health guidelines and keeping our COVID case count low.

It's our best chance at safe holiday season – and a much happier, more social 2021.



Bill Beamish  
Mayor of Gibsons

