

## St. Andrew's United Church

### Reintegration Guidelines for Phasing in During a Pandemic

#### Purpose

St. Andrew's United Church has continued to provide online services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person gatherings have been prohibited by provincial order, as part of an unprecedented effort to contain the spread of the virus. In-person gatherings for prayer and worship are now permitted with certain conditions, as described in this document which adheres to provincial guidelines. As St. Andrew's enters the phases of re-establishing face-to-face activities, the focus will be on safety and care for its most vulnerable individuals, including many members who are older and/or have chronic medical conditions. With empathy and thoughtfulness, we will rethink how we provide ministry.

This guidance reflects the current need for protection from COVID-19. As the spread of infection is brought under further control, revised guidance will be issued.

All places of worship **must** adhere to the following requirements:

- Participation of no more than 30% of the capacity of premises.
- Maintaining a distance of two metres/six feet between all persons as much as possible.
- Masks, will be worn inside the premises (according to Halton Hills By-law No. 2020-0037)
- Limiting singing and loud speaking.
- Avoiding opportunities for the virus to spread through touch, either directly or indirectly through surfaces and objects, including objects that may be used in rituals or ceremonies.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection.

Faith community leaders/organizers are responsible for preventing the risk of infection among staff, volunteers, community members, and visitors who participate in their activities.

#### Transitioning Phase

In this phase, the premises may be entered and used minimally. Sunday morning services will continue online. The Minister may be utilizing the sanctuary for recording of services. The Office Administrator may be utilizing space to provide administrative duties.

Items to be done in preparation for this phase:

- Remove seating, or if seating is fixed, mark it unavailable or close it off to ensure a two metre/six foot distance between rows of seating. Plan the quantity of seating to allow for a two metre/six foot distance between individuals or household groups along each row.
- Remove all hymnbooks, bibles and items that can be handled, from pews.
- Post signage at doors to screen anyone who enters the premises, instructing that anyone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms of being unwell or who has been in contact with someone with active COVID-19 is not allowed to enter. Anyone with even one symptom of COVID-19 should have testing and self-isolate.
- Add similar information to the organization's website.
- Plan and ensure a continuous strategy to control movement into and out, using a sign-in-and-out procedure. Do not use a pen that can be passed between people.
- If there is a case of COVID-19 who was contagious while attending services, public health will use that list to notify the place of worship attendees and staff. This may include instructions to self-isolate or self-monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Office Administrator or Minister will contact attendees in the event that someone has attended or been in the premises while contagious.
- Ensure all water systems are safe to use after the prolonged facility shutdown, and shut off water fountains.
- Develop a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting. Public health will advise of any additional cleaning and disinfecting measures needed to reduce the risk of spread in the setting.
- Develop and post signs for correct handwashing at all sinks.
- Ensure that hand sanitizer is available at all entrances.
- Ensure washrooms are always stocked with liquid soap and paper towels. Antibacterial soap is not required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Staff and volunteers must report illness immediately to their management/ Ministry & Personnel as appropriate, and stay home if they are sick. Staff and volunteers must be screened or self-screen each time before starting their duties. Persons who become ill while participating in any events at St. Andrew's must go home and self-isolate. They are encouraged to call Telehealth, their health care provider or an assessment centre for guidance about testing.

Staff and volunteers should use a mask/face covering at all times while providing services with other people present and in proximity of less than two metres.

If there are new duties being assigned to staff (an online service as well as an in-person one, additional cleaning, etc.), ensure that the position descriptions are adjusted to allow for these with the removal of some current duties to make this possible.

During this phase there may be memorial services or small group gatherings of 10 people or less on church premises. Precautions of hand sanitizing, handwashing, masks and distancing of two metres/six feet should be encouraged. No food services or receptions will be provided on church premises.

## **Re-Entry Phase (*expected to be mid-September 2020, subject to evaluation*)**

During this phase, Sunday morning services may resume, and events and gatherings may resume, all with mitigating safety precautions.

Precautions will include:

- Reminders to everyone in written notices, and spoken at each service, not to attend the service in person if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Reduced capacity to 30% of usual capacity, with distancing measures to keep people or families two metres/six feet apart. A greeter or usher will assist with this. Inside the sanctuary, 30% of capacity = 60 individuals.
- Modification of activities before and during the service to ensure a two metre/six foot distance between leaders, staff, volunteers and attendees at all times. A greeter or usher will help direct people to appropriate seating.
- Provision of masks, hand sanitizer (70% to 90% alcohol concentration) and sanitizing wipes. Attendees should be encouraged to use their own masks. Proper disposal areas will be provided for discarded items.
- Sign-in procedure without using a pen that can be passed from person to person. A greeter or usher will assist with signing people in.
- Children should remain with their parents. Separate in-person children's activities will be suspended.
- Activities will be evaluated and any activities or events that increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission will be altered or discontinued. (The free clothing room area is closed now until further notice).

The following in-person practices are suspended:

- Congregational singing and chanting
- Choir practice and in-person singing
- Wind instruments
- Physical contact. (People will be encouraged to greet each other with a smile)
- Items that cannot be cleaned and sanitized before and after use – hymnbooks, bulletins, envelopes
- Communion
- Sharing of microphones
- Rituals involving close physical contact (e.g. baptism)
- Offering plates. (A designated area for donations will be arranged)
- Food services, like coffee-time after the service

## **Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection**

Disinfectant kills germs on surfaces. Remove surface dirt first in order for the disinfectant to work. Most regular household cleaning products are effective at eliminating the virus. Cleaning and disinfectant products should have an 8-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) to confirm it is approved for use in Canada. Check the expiry dates of products and always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Keep products away from children.

Cleaning/disinfection wipes should only be used for surfaces, and according to the manufacturer's instructions. Alternatively, chlorine bleach solutions may be used for disinfection. Prepare fresh bleach solution daily.

Educate staff on proper use of cleaning agents and disinfectants, including required disinfectant contact times (amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection). Understand safety requirement of mask and gloves.

Ensure adequate ventilation when using products (e.g. open windows, doors, or use fans). Ensure ventilation systems are operating properly, and replace filters as scheduled or sooner.

Clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces (e.g. toilets, sinks, door handles, light switches, remote controls) twice a day or more, and when visibly dirty.

Wash hands with soap and water immediately after cleaning.

## **Weddings and Funerals**

If a wedding, funeral or other ceremony is occurring in a place of worship, and has a ceremony at the place of worship, then the maximum number of participants is 30% of the capacity of the building. The above requirements still apply, including suspending social gatherings before or after the service, and not providing food services.

## **Providing Pastoral Care**

Reducing community spread requires reduced contacts and physical distancing. Visits may take place with masks, precautions and full consideration of minimizing risk. Best practices will include:

- Providing pastoral care by telephone or other electronic means.
- Following the guidelines of any health care facility being visited (hospital, or long-term care facility).
- As much as possible, avoiding different long-term care homes within 14 days of each other.
- Making as few in-person visits as possible and only when there is a compelling reason to do so (end of life, tragedy).

## Other Businesses or Tenants on Premises

Places of worship that offer free or rented spaces to other groups or businesses must abide by the emergency orders of the provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health, and all applicable public health and provincial guidance documents.

Ensure that any user group returning to the space has a plan for safety, practicing their program in accordance with public health guidelines and sector specific restrictions that apply. Cleaning protocols will be put in place according to their use.

Childcare services such as Future Scholars will have their own protocols for re-opening, including a maximum of 10 people per space (including adults), using their own door (the gym outside door) and large kitchen and washrooms behind the kitchen as dedicated spaces.

## More information

[www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19) or 416-338-7600.

*Province of Ontario, A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 2*, available online at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/framework-reopening-our-province-stage-2>

Halton Hills By-law No. 2020 – 0037 – a by-law to require the wearing of a mask or face covering in enclosed public places during the Covid-19 pandemic

Date of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Board Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_