

Title: Guidelines for Reopening During COVID-19 (Phase 2)

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This guideline has been developed to help HIPM hosting its services during COVID-19. It is important for us to understand that the potential for the virus to spread is very high during religious gatherings. Every church is taking measures to follow the public health directives of the province and taking caution as none of them want to be known for causing infection to their congregants and eventually triggering community spread. In addition, the medical world is expecting that there could be a 'second wave' of Covid-19 this Fall. HIPM is taking steps to provide a healthy environment knowing the limitation we have in the building. Please read this guideline carefully to understand the steps that are being taken and the steps that need to be followed by the congregation towards assembling at the church premises.

We will be opening the church in a phased manner to address the public health measures. We recommend the congregation to come for the in person service with the below stated requirements. However, please note that the church does not accept any responsibility for congregants who are affected with COVID-19 as a result of attending in-person services.

Following are the considerations for Phase 2.

During Phase 2, church is opened for all except for those who are listed in the "Who cannot attend" list below.

Who cannot attend?

1. Children below age 12
2. People who are with underlying health conditions and weakened immune system
3. Those who are sick and showing symptoms of sickness (cough, cold, sneezing, throat infection, fever). Please stay at home for the safety of everyone.
4. Those who have recently travelled outside Atlantic Canada are require to isolate for minimum of 14 days upon arrival.
5. Basement area will not be open to the congregation for use during Phase2. Access to this area will be restricted to Pastor's family only.

Book your seat

1. Those who are allowed to attend are required to book your seats through the online reservation system and receive confirmation of acceptance.

How many can attend church?

1. Even though the province of Nova Scotia has set 50 as gathering limit with social distancing, considering the available space at the main level, a total of 32 people can gather in each service.
2. This includes Pastor's family of 3 and volunteers.

Arrival time:

1. Those who are registered and got accepted need to arrive at the church before 10:00am.
2. Church door will be closed at 10:00am and will not be opened after that. If you are late, please stay home and attend online service.
3. This is to prevent unexpected people (strangers) entering into the church and to ensure a safe environment. Also, to reduce interruptions during live taping for YouTube.
4. No social gathering will be permitted before and after services.

As you enter:

1. The volunteer at the entrance will ensure that you have already reserved your seat. Those who enter without reservation will not be allowed to participate in the service.
2. No handshakes and no hugs are entertained during your stay in the premises.
3. First thing you are required to do is to sanitise your hands.
4. If you are with your family members, be seated together in the seats that are marked for family.
5. If you are there by yourself, please get seated in the single seats.

Singing:

1. Congregational singing is a high-risk activity and is not encouraged. However you are permitted to hum along. Infected people (because of the asymptomatic nature of COVID-19) can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets while singing.
2. Shouting is a high-risk activity and not permitted. Infected people (because of the asymptomatic nature of COVID-19) can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets while singing.
3. During Phase 2 number of people at the stage is limited to 3 (2 singers & 1 musician) as people don't belong to same household require to maintain social distance.
4. When more than one household is singing at the stage, the individual microphones need to be identified with the singer and social distancing requires to be maintained.

Using washrooms:

1. As far as possible avoid using washroom at the church as it is a high-risk activity.
2. In case of unavoidable situation, make sure washroom sign shows it is "Ready" for use before using them, as they need to be disinfected between each use by a volunteer.
3. Only one person is allowed to use the washroom at a time. (Not both men and women at the same time).
4. Use the paper towels / air dryer to dry your hands.
5. Avoid touching any surface or holding on to any objects unnecessarily.

Practices - nor permitted:

1. No handshakes, no hugs and no laying on of hands while praying.
2. Even though there is no specific time for offering collection at the church during Phase 2, you are encouraged to place the offering in an offering envelope and drop it in the offering box. Those who are transferring online can mention online. Credit/Debit machine will not be used during Phase 2.
3. We will not have communion during Phase 2 until prefilled and prepackaged juice and wafer are made available.

Practices - recommended:

1. Individuals are recommended to wear clean, properly fitted non-medical masks to further reduce the risk of transmission. However, even after wearing a mask, a six feet distance must be maintained with those who are not their household.
2. Cough and sneeze etiquette should be followed. This includes coughing and sneezing into the elbow or a tissue, discarding tissues into a lined garbage bin, and using hand sanitizer immediately afterwards.

3. Serving food and beverages at the church is not permitted as it may increase the risk of spreading COVID-19
4. Participants are encouraged to get your own water bottle, snack, etc. No water or coffee will be available in the main level.
5. After each service commonly touched areas such as seating, washrooms, door knobs, light-switches, thermostats knobs and dials, microphones, instruments, sound systems, key boards must be strictly cleaned with Disinfecting Wipe. Records must be maintained to this effect.

Online methods to continue:

1. Online (YouTube and / or Facebook) live services will continue.
2. Online giving options are kept open, and you are encouraged to give online.
3. Online prayers and all other children and youth zoom calls will continue in this new normal.

During weekdays:

1. Church is open during weekdays for counsel, prayer, cleaning and for other activities.
2. Family or individuals can come as per the above guidelines, but must call ahead first to ensure the availability of Pastor and/or Joy and to ensure the building is cleaned and ready to accommodate.

References:

1. COVID-19 Information guidance for places of worship, Government of Alberta | Updated: May 23, 2020
2. Guidelines for reopening your church, Family Research Council, Washington, D.C
3. Leading Into Our New Future: How Canada's National Recovery Plan Impacts Churches, Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer NS.
4. Preparing Your Building For Re-entry, Maritime District PAOC
5. COVID-19: what it means for Nova Scotians-Public health directives to help contain the spread of COVID-19. <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/what-it-means-for-nova-scotians/#gatherings>
6. COVID-19: staying healthy - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/staying-healthy/>
7. Preparing to reopen Nova Scotia - <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/>
8. Reopening the church? – Things for church leaders to consider - https://mcusercontent.com/43dd7a370de82ce9895181522/files/b324a53b-6f45-4016-97b5-1843fb4cf390/Reopening_the_Church_Document.02.pdf