



**Ministry, Pastoral Care, Worship
Guidelines and Guidelines
for the Safe Reopening of Diocese
of Ontario Church Buildings**

DIOCESE OF ONTARIO

**RED STAGE
GUIDELINES
Version 1.0**

Effective June 29, 2020

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Ministry, Pastoral Care and Worship Guidelines for the Safe Reopening of Diocese of Ontario Church Buildings (DRAFT)

Red Stage Effective June 29, 2020

The provision of ministry, pastoral care and worship is an essential function of the Church, especially in times of crisis and illness. Healthy spacing (physical distancing) measures enacted to limit the spread of COVID-19 require new and adaptive practices to be deployed. However, ministry, pastoral care and worship continue to be a priority for all clergy and lay leaders of the diocese.

Directives of the Government of Ontario and local public health authorities should be followed at all times, including pandemic hygiene guidance in respect of washing hands often; staying home if unwell, practicing healthy spacing and where it is not possible, wearing a mask or face covering.

The re-opening of our church buildings for worship, ministry and community use will need to take place over a period of time and within the guidelines. During the Red Stage (as outlined by the Provincial House of Bishops in the “Loving our Neighbours” letter), churches begin to move into limited in-person gatherings, one-to-one pastoral care and the planning process for re-opening buildings in a controlled way.

Guiding Principles

- As a church we must do all we can to protect our people, our communities and all those we serve.
- Strictly adhere to all federal, provincial, municipal and diocesan directives and recommendations with regards to healthy spacing measures, self-isolation procedures, and/or health hygiene.
- Remain at home unless it is necessary to leave your home.
- Vulnerable people for whom there is an increased risk of more severe outcomes should refrain from engaging in ministry beyond their home and delegate responsibilities to others as required. This includes those who are aged 65 and over; with compromised immune systems; and with underlying medical conditions.
- Any spaces used for any purpose must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected as often as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment after each use.
- Each church may choose to move at a slower pace than the Guidelines set out.

Building and General Ministry Guidelines

Building Use

- Church Offices may reopen for clergy, staff and lay leaders to a maximum of 10 people in the building at one time and only where physical distancing is possible.
- Staff who are uncomfortable returning to the office and able to continue to work from home should be supported in doing so.

- Regular hand-washing or sanitizer use is required (Sanitizer is not as effective as washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.)
- Regular disinfection of common surfaces including doorknobs, countertops, and office electronics.
- In person meetings continue to be discouraged but small meetings (10 or fewer persons) will be permitted where physical distancing is possible. The meeting may not exceed one (1) hour in length. Open doors and windows to provide ventilation. Fans may not be used. Face coverings are recommended. No singing is allowed at any meeting.
- Twelve step groups may continue to use the building, at the discretion of the Churchwardens, provided they agree to adhere to physical distancing guidelines and arrange for cleaning of the areas used following their meeting. Each group must be 10 persons or less. No coffee or other refreshments are to be prepared or served at the church. Individuals may bring their own refreshments with them.
- Licenced day care operations may resume provided the operator ensures compliance with Provincial regulations
- Where a formal lease with a tenant exists, it can be honoured provided that the wardens are satisfied that the tenant has the necessary protections in place including proper sanitation. Third Party Insurance coverage continues to be mandatory. Buildings remain closed to other rentals and users.
- Occasional and time-limited access to the buildings is only permitted in the following circumstances:
 - For designated persons to conduct a weekly inspection of the building.
 - For staff to perform essential functions that could not otherwise be completed.
 - For staff and volunteers to provide essential services to those who live in poverty, are food insecure, and/or precariously housed.
 - For musicians (no more than 5 including the equipment operator) to record music to contribute to parish life, with the permission of the wardens and no more than once per week.
- Until further notice, buildings remain closed to other uses and users.
- Washrooms must be cleaned thoroughly between each gathering of people in the building.
- Extra paper towels should be made available for turning taps on and off, touching toilet handles, opening doors, etc. A covered wastepaper basket should be placed outside each bathroom door to deposit any paper towels used to open the door from the inside.
- The ability to physically distance within washrooms needs to be considered. This may mean only one person in a washroom if there is no room to move around one another or wait for the sink without becoming too physically close. If there are multiple sinks, every other sink should be marked 'do not use' to prevent close proximity at sinks.
- A checklist regarding building use is attached.
- Incoming mail should be deposited in a bin or box and not handled for a minimum of three days.
- Community gardens may be operated in compliance with advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including in respect of healthy spacing, cleaning and disinfecting.
- Until further notice, diocesan cemeteries should remain closed except in the following circumstances: For graveside services and interments with a maximum of ten people plus funeral staff in attendance maintaining healthy spacing and hygiene measures; And for essential safety including grass cutting and monument stabilization. Monument construction is permitted so long as it does not coincide with graveside services and interments and essential safety.

Pastoral Guidelines

- Clergy should undertake pastoral care by phone calls and video connections whenever possible.
- Clerics or pastoral visitors must be healthy and without an underlying medical condition that makes them vulnerable. A self-screening for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness should occur before visiting.
- If possible, a pastoral visit should occur outdoors.
- Keep in-home visits to parishioners and others in need to those most in need of care and compassion, where the presence of a minister is essential. For instance to support a highly vulnerable and isolated older adult, anointing a gravely ill person and/or to comfort the dying. For all inside pastoral visits, a face covering must be worn.
- Please refrain from any refreshments (coffee, tea, etc).
- Physical distancing is required at all in-person pastoral visits. Do not shake hands or hug.
- Pastoral visits with those who are self-isolating or have an active case of COVID-19 are prohibited.
- If called to anoint ensure both hands and oil stock are sanitized prior to use. Replace the lid on the stock immediately after dipping your finger. Anoint the dying and wash your hands and the oil stock as soon as possible following your visit.
- If permitted to visit, adhere to all institutional guidelines when visiting long-term care homes and/or hospitals. Visit only one person at any time, even if that means separated visits to the home or hospital. If you are unclear or unsure about the protocols, call ahead and speak with the nursing station.
- Following a visit to an institution where COVID-19 may be present, wash your hands thoroughly, go directly home, change clothes, and wash the clothes you have worn immediately in hot water.
- Clerics or pastoral visitors must maintain contact information for the purpose of Tracing if required at a later date.

Formation, Fellowship and Stewardship

- Formation activities such as Bible or book studies, prayer groups, confirmation classes, children and youth activities may continue on-line. For children and youth activities, all Safe Church guidelines regarding relating on-line or through social media with children must be followed.
- Fellowship may continue through virtual coffee hours, through the use of phone trees and other methods to ensure that each member of the parish is regularly contacted by others.
- Outdoor gatherings of 10 or less for formation and fellowship are permitted. No refreshments may be served or shared. Individuals may be invited to bring their own refreshments.
- Continual stewardship activities are recommended to assist parishioners in maintaining their offerings. Particular attention should be paid to encouraging parishioners who are not already on Pre-Authorized Giving plans to sign up.

Meal programs and Food Banks

- Food-assistance programs are encouraged to continue with adequate hygienic and physical distancing controls in place.
- All local public health regulations must be followed.
- A checklist is attached.

Enhanced Communication

- Clergy and Churchwardens should implement or continue a parish plan for regular communication with parishioners, by phone, email, social media, and/or other remote means.
- Pastoral visiting teams may continue to contact members by phone, prioritizing those who may not have family or friends to check in on them.
- Clergy and Churchwardens should send regular emails and other communications to parish lists which include prayer resources and spiritual encouragement.
- Share pastoral care contact information widely so that those in need of care know how to connect with clergy without visiting the church.

Worship Guidelines

- In-person worship within the church building is not permitted. Each church's leadership team should continue to discern and develop how best to minister to their parish members and community. Streamed and recorded online worship through a virtual platform will continue to be the primary method.
- Services continue to be Services of the Word only. The Bishop directs priests to refrain from the celebration of the Eucharist during this time when the community of the faithful are not able to be gathered and instead focus on the Word.
- In times of pastoral extremis a final Eucharistic meal to the dying is permitted with permission of the Bishop.

Outdoor Services

- Some parishes may have room on their own property to hold services outside. The numbers at such gatherings may not exceed 10.
- All physical distancing requirements must still be honoured.
- Services continue to be Services of the Word only.
- No church facilities (washrooms, etc) are to be open or used.
- A checklist for outdoor services may be found attached.

Pastoral Offices

- Small outdoor funerals and weddings, with no more than 10 people (including the officiant), are permitted.
- Emergency baptisms are permitted with prior approval of the Bishop.
- A wedding liturgy will be a service of the Word and there is to be no reception at the church.
- A funeral liturgy will be a service of the Word and there is to be no reception at the church. For more information, see <https://thebao.ca/more-qsas/> of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario.
- Encourage the possibility of a public gathering at some later date when the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.
- A checklist for Wedding and Funeral liturgies may be found attached.

Livestreaming Worship Services

- Where parish livestreamed services are established, a weekly worship service is permitted to be conducted in the church building.
- Only five (5) persons may be present when filming or live streaming a service. This would include any person running the AV equipment. All persons must remain a minimum of six feet (approx. 2m) apart at all times. If there are singers, a greater physical distance from each singer to other people is necessary (at least 12 feet.) For those who record in segments such that it may appear that more than five persons are present at once, it may be wise to state such in the credits.
- Areas of the building used for the filming of services must be cleaned and disinfected after each service. For more information on cleaning, please see Appendix A.
- While this is an unprecedented time, innovative and adaptive forms of worship are happening in our churches. If livestreamed worship services are offered, you are to keep track of these so that information may be recorded in parish vestry books, as and when it may be done (not expected each week), for the historical record of this time and the response of parishes. It is encouraged that the number of viewers be added and noted in the comments section which social media platform was used.

Home Prayers

- Because we are to remain home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bishop commends to you an opportunity for daily home prayers, centred around a meal, and suggests the following as worship resources:
 - Home Prayers (Book of Alternative Services, page 687).
 - Forms of Prayers To Be Used in Families (Book of Common Prayer, page 728).
 - An Agape – Iona 2007 – John Davies.
 - Spiritual Communion When Unable to Attend a celebration of Holy Communion: A liturgy to be said at home or with family (Diocese of Niagara).
 - Prayers for Community in a Time of Pandemic (Corrymeela Community).

CHECKLISTS

Preparing Parish Offices

	Notes	Date completed
Arrange for high touch points of office to be cleaned and sanitized twice daily, mid-day and end of day.		
Washrooms that are used should be cleaned twice daily at minimum		
Place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content at the entrances and exits and throughout the office.		
Provide masks (disposable or washable cloth) and encourage their use. Provide a laundry basket to collect used cloth masks at exits.		
Order all required cleaning supplies for office and staff.		
Install plexiglass if needed to ensure physical distancing at points of public access, e.g. at reception. Supplier links: https://www.artsoft.ca/catalog/product-category/social-distancing-sign/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzoKChLP_6AIVnvrjBx0zlAlaEAAYASAAEgJZEfD_BwE http://www.lumichrom.com/covid-19-plexiglass-safety-barriers?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIy-edh7T_6AIVxf3jBx2KyQJiEAAYASAAEgJZQ_D_BwE		
Put up posters at entrances educating staff about symptoms (COVID19/cold/flu), sanitizing and washing hands.		
Put up posters educating staff on COVID-19: physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough hygiene, use of face coverings, response if showing symptoms (COVID-19/cold/flu), or that anyone having travelled internationally in the last 14 days must stay home.		
Close common areas like kitchen, lunchroom, coffee and tea stations.		
Reduce meeting room capacity to ensure physical distancing or close completely if unable to ensure physical distancing; post signs on meeting rooms advising limits or not to use.		
Close rooms that will not be in use.		
Post signs on photocopier and/or other shared equipment to "Please wash hands after use."		

Remove all shared items such as reading materials from lunchroom and waiting areas. Each staff member must wash own dishes and utensils or place them in a dishwasher.		
Rearrange workstations if needed to ensure physical distancing. This may include installing plexiglass if needed.		
Do not share microphones for meetings.		
Designate how many people will be allowed in a washroom at one time. Post a sign along with floor indicators in the hallway to show physical distance for those who are waiting for the washroom. Supplier link: https://safetymedia.com/category/healthCOVID19/covid-19-signage-and-displays		
Designate how many people will be allowed on stairways or in elevator/lift (if applicable) at one time. Post sign on elevator to advise staff.		
Where possible, introduce more fresh air by increasing the ventilation system's air intake or opening windows. Avoid central recirculation where possible.		
Parish offices will remain closed to the public. Post signs at entrances indicating that offices are closed to the public; visitors by appointment only.		
Ensure that all visitors have appointments and are signing in at reception. Obtain and retain full contact information, for contact tracing if needed.		
Gatherings should be by appointment or invitation only. Our buildings remain closed to the public.		
Preparing Parish Staff		
Communicate the Return to Parish Plan to staff before returning.		
Communicate that staff who are ill or who have been exposed to COVID-19 must stay home.		
Communicate to staff that they must be symptom-free before returning to the office.		
Communicate to staff that if they have travelled internationally in the last 14 days prior to return to office, they must stay home.		
Communicate to staff that if they experience symptoms (COVID-19/cold/flu) while at work, they must go home or work from home.		
Communicate to staff to keep physical distance at all times, practice good hand hygiene and cough hygiene, and that they must wear a face covering when away from their workstations.		
Communicate to staff to take proper breaks during the day for stretching.		
Remind staff to take care of their mental health and to take regular breaks		
Return to Parish Office		
Train staff on hand hygiene, cough hygiene and use of face coverings and gloves.		

Remind staff that they must clean hands when they arrive at the office.		
Remind staff that if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19/cold/flu, they should advise their supervisor immediately and return home or work from home.		
Remind staff to maintain physical distance while at the office and to wear face covering outside of their work area.		
Daily check ins with staff on whether they are experiencing symptoms (COVID-19/cold/flu) after return.		
Conduct weekly meeting to advise staff on updates, how things are progressing, any concerns or questions, etc.		
Ensure that you have a list of staff who are working each day, for contact tracing if needed.		
Ensure that any visitors are signing in and obtain full contact information, for contact tracing if needed.		

Outdoor Wedding Checklist

	Notes	Date completed
Obtain permission from the Bishop		
Have signage about hand hygiene in all washrooms.		
Physical distancing is to be maintained.		
The number of people must not exceed 10 including the officiant, photographers and any other planners or staff.		
A list of attendees must be filed in the parish office for at least 30 days in case contact tracing is required.		
If using chairs, bulletins may be placed on chairs. Bulletins may not be handed out to people arriving.		
Ushers may lead people to chairs while remaining physically distanced.		
Communicate to the wedding party that those who have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, a cold, the flu or who are ill must stay home. <u>This includes clergy.</u>		
No Eucharist.		
No congregational singing. A soloist may sing provided they are no closer than 12 feet (4m) to the nearest other person.		
The officiant must wear a mask or face shield unless six feet of distance can always be maintained.		
The officiant is not to wrap their stole around the couple's hands.		
If a sound system is used, ensure everyone has their own microphone.		
If wedding party cannot be physically distanced, masks must be worn. The wedding couple does not need to be physically distanced from each other.		
No receiving line, handshakes or hugs.		

Outdoor Funeral Checklist

	Notes	Date completed
Have signage about hand hygiene		
Physical distancing is to be maintained.		
The number of people must not exceed 10 including the officiant and musicians. It does not include the funeral home staff.		
A list of attendees must be filed in the parish office for at least 30 days in case contact tracing is required.		
If using chairs, bulletins may be placed on chairs. Bulletins may not be handed out to people as they arrive.		
Communicate to the family and to any parish staff or volunteers that those who have been exposed to COVID19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, a cold, the flu or who are ill must stay home. <u>This includes clergy.</u>		
No Eucharist.		
No congregational singing. A soloist may sing provided they are no closer than 12 feet (4m) to the nearest other person.		
The officiant must wear a mask or face shield unless six feet of distance can always be maintained.		
If a sound system is used, ensure everyone has their own microphone.		
No hugs or handshakes.		

Baptism Checklist

	Notes	Date completed
Baptisms are only those that are considered urgent.		
Obtain permission from the Bishop.		
The number of people must not exceed 10.		
Have face coverings available. Cloth masks are preferred.		
A list of attendees must be filed in the parish office for at least 30 days in case contact tracing is required.		
Create single use bulletins (or on screen) rather than prayer books. Remove any other shared items such as brochures, hymnals or children's books or toys. Ensure everyone has their own microphones.		
Communicate to the family and anyone who may attend that those who have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, a cold, the flu or who are ill must stay home. <u>This includes clergy.</u>		
No Eucharist.		
No singing.		
The Peace and any greeting by those attending is shared without physical contact.		
Open windows and doors of space for ventilation.		
The officiant must wear a mask or face shield unless six feet distance can always be maintained.		
No hugs or handshakes.		
The container used as the font is sanitized and filled with clean water.		
The person to be baptized, if an infant, remains in the arms of their family of one household. A family member will pour the water upon the infant.		
The baptized is anointed with oil on a clean new cotton ball. The cotton ball is burned after the baptism.		
A member of the baptismal party lights the baptismal candle from the paschal candle as the words of presentation are said.		

Use of Church Buildings by Outside groups who have leases

	Notes	Date completed
General		
At no time should there be more than 10 people in the building.		
Staff and volunteers have access to face coverings and hand sanitizer.		
People are designated to clean and sanitize high traffic areas, including washrooms, at least twice daily.		
Leaders follow all Public Health guidelines.		
Outside Groups		
Congregations may permit licenced daycares or daycamps to use the facility provided they follow all health guidelines regarding physical distancing, etc., and the congregation/lessor have resources to handle the cleaning requirements between each use.		
Request written details as to how the leasing group will meet health guidelines, prior to their use of the facility.		
Require a signed waiver regarding the risk of the transmission.		
Preparing the facility		
Clean and disinfect high-touch areas shared surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings.		
Designate separate entrance and exit with signage.		
Place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content at the entrance and exit and throughout the facility.		
Put up posters educating visitors about COVID-19 and distancing protocols.		
Close rooms that will not be in use.		
Remove all shared items such as brochures and other reading material.		
Designate how many people will be allowed in a washroom at one time. Post a sign with floor indicators in the hallway to show physical distance for those who are waiting.		

Use of Church Building by Food Sustainability Ministries and 12-Step Groups

	Notes	Date completed
General		
Staff and volunteers receive information and training about new processes.		
Staff and volunteers have access to face coverings and hand sanitizer.		
People are designated to clean and sanitize high traffic areas, including washrooms, at least twice daily.		
Leaders remain aware of new Public Health guidelines.		
Outside Groups		
Congregations may permit outside groups to use the facility where those groups are leasing or where it is a vulnerable group ministry, providing they follow all health guidelines regarding physical distancing, etc., and the congregation/rental groups have resources to handle the cleaning requirements between each use. Facility rentals must be suspended if groups cannot or will not adhere to gathering restrictions.		
Request written details as to how the rental group will meet health guidelines, prior to their use of the facility.		
Groups must sign a statement agreeing that they will follow these guidelines. A template may be requested from the bishop's office.		
Preparing the facility		
Clean and disinfect high-touch shared surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator/lift buttons, and railings.		
Designate separate entrance and exit with signage.		
Place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content at the entrance and exit and throughout the facility.		
Put up posters educating visitors about COVID-19 and distancing protocols.		
Close rooms that will not be in use.		
Remove all shared items such as brochures and other reading material.		
To indicate proper physical distancing, rearrange chairs.		
Designate how many people will be allowed in a washroom at one time. Post a sign with floor indicators in the hallway to show physical distance for those who are waiting.		

Food security ministries to vulnerable populations continue to be permitted		
For physical distancing, engineer your space to ensure 6 feet apart for everybody all the time.		
Post hand washing and hand sanitizer instructions where they are easily visible. Make hand sanitizer and appropriate signage available at all entry points.		
Clean the general environment and surfaces that are touched often. First, clean visible dirt then apply disinfectant with suitable contact time at a frequency appropriate for the use of the surface. Set up a system, a schedule, and get everybody on board. For cleaning instructions, see the Public Health Ontario Fact Sheet at www.publichealthontario.ca .		
Face coverings should be worn by all staff, volunteers and clients where physical distance cannot be maintained. Invite parishioners to supply cloth face coverings that can be given to clients to keep.		

Appendix A: Cleaning and Disinfecting

Routine cleaning followed by disinfection is a best practice to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This is a two-step process: first clean, then disinfect.

1. Cleaning

- Cleaning breaks down grease and removes organic material (e.g., dirt, dust, microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses) from surfaces or objects.
- The cleaning process physically removes microorganisms from surfaces helping to lower the risk of spreading infection.
- Cleaning products can be purchased on their own or combined with a disinfectant in one solution.

2. Disinfection

- Disinfection uses chemicals to kill microorganisms on surfaces or objects. For it to be effective, cleaning should be done first.
- Disinfectants include diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and commercial products with an eight-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN). A list of disinfectants where evidence exists for their use against COVID-19 may be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-healthproducts/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Check the expiry date before using cleaners and disinfectants.
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions for use to ensure their effectiveness including how long they must remain in contact with the surface.
- To make a 1:10 bleach solution using household bleach:
- 62 ml (1/4 cup) household bleach + 562 ml (2 1/4 cups) water or
- 250 ml (1 cup) household bleach + 2250 ml (9 cups) water.
- Do not mix bleach solutions with ammonia based cleaners.
- Bleach solution must be made daily as it breaks down in effectiveness.
- Bleach solution must be left on for a minimum of one (1) minute.
- Disinfecting wipes should be discarded if they become dry, and are not recommended for heavily soiled areas. Given their impact on the environment, they should not be used for regular cleaning but only for the occasional quick disinfection of a surface.

General Principals

- Churches should follow their regular protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection with the following additions:
- High-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty. This includes but is not limited to: doorknobs, hand rails, light switches, toilet handles, and faucet

handles. To assist in making a list in your location: have two or three people walk through the route most people will take through the building and observe what they touch.

- High-touch electronic devices (e.g., tablets, computer keyboards, telephones, microphones) can be disinfected with 70% alcohol products.
- Washrooms are to be cleaned daily when the building is in use.
- Gloves should be worn when handling cleaning and disinfectant products.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected (eg prayer books, extra cushions in pews).
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, if possible.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.
 - Ensure any water heaters are set to at least 120° F.
 - Flush the building's water system.
 - Flush hot and cold water through all points of use.
 - Flushing may need to occur in segments (e.g., floors, individual rooms) due to facility size and water pressure. The purpose of building flushing is to replace all water inside building piping with fresh water.
 - Flush until the hot water reaches its maximum temperature.
 - Care should be taken to minimize splashing and aerosol generation during flushing.
 - Clean all decorative water features, such as fountains.
 - Ensure safety equipment including fire sprinkler systems, eye wash stations, and safety showers are clean and well-maintained.
 - Maintain the water system (including "regularly checking water quality parameters such as temperature, pH, and disinfectant levels")

COVID-19 Sample Entrance Signage:



Poster 2 Covid - 19
Entrances.pdf

Face Masks may be purchased at a variety of locations. Most Walmart, Shopper's Drug Marts and Canadian Tires for example carry masks. Check local drug stores as well.