



ANGLICAN EAST NL

Many Members, One Body (Rom. 12:4-5): Guidelines for Safe Practices in Anglican East NL in the time of COVID-19

Introduction

This document has been drafted in adherence to “Guidance for Faith-Based Organizations” as released by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Chief Medical Officer. This Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/alert-system/alert-level-2/>. The Diocese has taken this guidance and expanded upon it with further advice from other Health Authorities in Canada and the World Health Organization. Although the understanding of Covid-19 is still evolving, all of these leading health authorities have established scientifically based guidance on the safest and most effective ways to prevent the transmission of this virus in public settings. We want to insure our communities are kept as safe as possible.

We have presented this information in a practical, “step by step” process of implementation. We can’t possibly account for every local consideration and circumstance, yet it is intended that Parishes apply the contents in this document as fully as possible within your circumstances. In instances where there is question or uncertainty, as well as instances where practical application of aspects of this document is not possible, consultation should be made with Synod Office. It is best that we all be as sure as possible in what we are doing and insure that our Church buildings are safe gathering places.

PLEASE NOTE - In Alert Level 2, places of worship may host services and faith-based activities of no more than 50 people, or 50 per cent capacity, whichever is less. This limit includes officiants, staff and volunteers.

This is a “living” document. It will be adjusted and revised as our understanding of this virus evolves, and the increased or diminished threat of it within our jurisdiction is realized. Any and all revisions will be based upon direction and guidance from health authorities. Although many will find the restrictions frustrating and cumbersome, our response to this pandemic cannot be emotionally based. The health and wellbeing, even the very lives of those within our communities, depends on our diligent and knowledge-based approach to how we function and operate in this time. As faith communities, we will need to be informed and diligent, patient and compassionate, creative and imaginative as we journey forward as the Church in our time.

Basic Principles: Distance & Hygiene

The function and operation of our communities must keep two principles foremost in our discernment: Physical distance and Hygiene.

The virus, known as Covid-19, is transmitted through respiratory droplets. Whenever a breath is exhaled by an infected individual, that breath contains droplets of which the virus is present. When another person comes in contact with those droplets, either through close contact with an infected individual, or surfaces of which the droplets have landed, transmission occurs. Thus, keeping our distance and ensuring high standards of cleanliness are paramount to stopping the spread of this virus.

Of particular concern is transmission by asymptomatic individuals. These are people who have the virus, yet do not realize they have it. The virus can be present in the body for days before a person may start feeling ill. There are even cases of people who have contracted the virus and never feel ill.

Thus, to just avoid people who are feeling ill is not enough to protect yourself from Covid-19. The virus could be in your midst regardless.

The basic principles of distance and hygiene, in the context of symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission, are what underlies all aspects of this document and is what should guide the operation of our public spaces going forward.

Is now the right time for our Parish to reopen for public worship?

The first step in this process is to provide a copy of this document to the Parish Leadership. After a careful reading and consideration of its contents, a discussion should be entertained and the question asked: Is now the right time for us to open our Church building? The reopening of the Church building, or buildings, within your Parish may not be prudent or advisable at this time. The discernment will need to address the following:

Are our clergy and other worship leaders (organist, for example) part of the vulnerable population? Are those expected to undertake and oversee the reopening process (Greeters, Sexton, for example) a part of the vulnerable population? Do they feel safe and comfortable participating in public gatherings at this time?

In that many of our parishioners and clergy are vulnerable individuals as defined by the Public Health Agency of Canada, re-opening might not be appropriate for every parish at this time. The Public Health Agency of Canada defines a vulnerable individual as anyone who is an older adult (over the age of 60); at risk due to underlying medical conditions or; at risk due to a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment. Further to these physical conditions, socio-economic factors also place certain individuals at higher risk. More detailed information regarding those that are considered a part of the vulnerable population can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>.

People within the vulnerable population are not prevented from participating in public gatherings, yet they should understand the increased risk they assume in doing so. Pastoral care, compassion and understanding need to be extended to those who are uncomfortable with being a part of public gatherings at this time. They may be struggling between their sense of comfort and safety versus their “obligation” and commitment to their faith community. We need to assure them that their safety and comfort is what is important. No one should feel pressured to commit to anything that erodes their sense of safety or comfort.

Does the Parish have access to all the material and human resources necessary to reopen and remain open? Do we have sufficient cleaning materials? Do we have access to supplies of hand sanitation and paper masks? Do we have a consistent supplier that will be able to replenish our supplies when needed? Do we have the financial resources to acquire these materials on a regular basis going forward? Do we have the people necessary to implement and maintain this reopening plan?

Another consideration has to be towards if the Parish has the material and human resources available to implement and maintain the directives of this document. Ready and consistent supplies to undertake and maintain a more vigorous cleaning regime may not be available. Such heightened cleaning protocols will also involve greater cost than what would normally be the case. Having hand sanitation and paper masks (which will surely be utilized more often than in the past) will present the same challenges as cleaning products in the area of supply and cost. The people required to undertake and sustain the tasks necessary to keep our gatherings safe may not be available.

Are there other local considerations that will impact our ability to implement and maintain the direction provided in this document?

An example of a local consideration would be, especially for smaller church buildings, once physical distancing is accounted for, it may only be able to accommodate very few families. The layout of a smaller church may not allow for proper physical distancing at all. Such considerations will have an impact as to whether or not it is advisable for your Church Building to reopen at this time.

Once proper deliberation has occurred between the Parish leadership, if the decision is made to not reopen the Church Building at this time, please inform Synod Office of this decision and the reasons behind it. If the decision is made to proceed with reopening your Church Building, the application contained within this document will need to be completed and submitted to Synod Office. Once it has been reviewed and considered, the Bishop will grant or deny permission to reopen. **No Church building in this Diocese may reopen for public use until the Parish has received direct permission from the Bishop to proceed.**

Getting Organized

If your Parish has decided to proceed with reopening the Church building for public worship, the next step is to establish a working group to implement and oversee this process and to insure the standards contained within this document are maintained. The group will also make adjustments as necessary according to local conditions (community outbreak), Public Health Guidance and Restrictions, and Diocesan Directives. The working group should consist of the following:

The Rector and Parish Clergy

The Cleric is responsible to prepare and conduct the liturgy following the guidelines set out in this document and making further adjustments pursuant to local conditions, Public Health Guidance and Restrictions, and Diocesan Directives.

Facilitator

Responsible for overseeing and coordinating all aspects of the reopening of Church Buildings. The Facilitator will also coordinate with all responsible task leaders to insure completion of tasks and that the directives in this document are fully adhered to. The Facilitator is also responsible to ensure that people in the building adhere to the guidelines and to diplomatically and sensitively address those who are non-compliant.

Registrar

Responsible for pre-registering attendees to any and all public gatherings within Church Buildings, maintaining a record of all persons attending any public gathering within the Church, and insuring that restrictions as to the number of people present in any given space is in compliance with the Directives in this document as mandated by Public Health Restrictions.

Sexton

Responsible for the cleaning and disinfecting of public use spaces within the Church Buildings according to the Directives within this document as mandated by Public Health Guidelines and insuring a ready supply of appropriate cleaning, disinfecting, protective, and sanitation products.

Greeter

Responsible for Greeting and communicating the guidelines in place during public worship, confirming the list of those in attendance, and to provide support to those in attendance during the time of worship.

Each of these task leaders can be more than one person. In some instances, multiple people may be required to fulfill some of these roles. For instance, the frequency and amount of cleaning that the Church building will need on an ongoing basis will dictate that it is a task of which multiple people will be required. It would simply be too much for one person to handle. Each Parish should discern whether or not each role should be filled by one, or multiple, people to best accommodate the application of the directives in this document. Another consideration is going to centre around what human resources are available to the Parish in this regard.

In recruiting and filling these roles, once again, consideration has to be given towards whether or not such people are members of the vulnerable population. The same consideration must be given as was stated previously. No one should feel pressured to commit to anything that erodes their sense of safety or comfort.

Preparing for Re-Opening

With the task force now in place, the next step is to begin preparing the building for reopening and to prepare the Parish for gathering once more. The task force should gather in the worship space and complete the following:

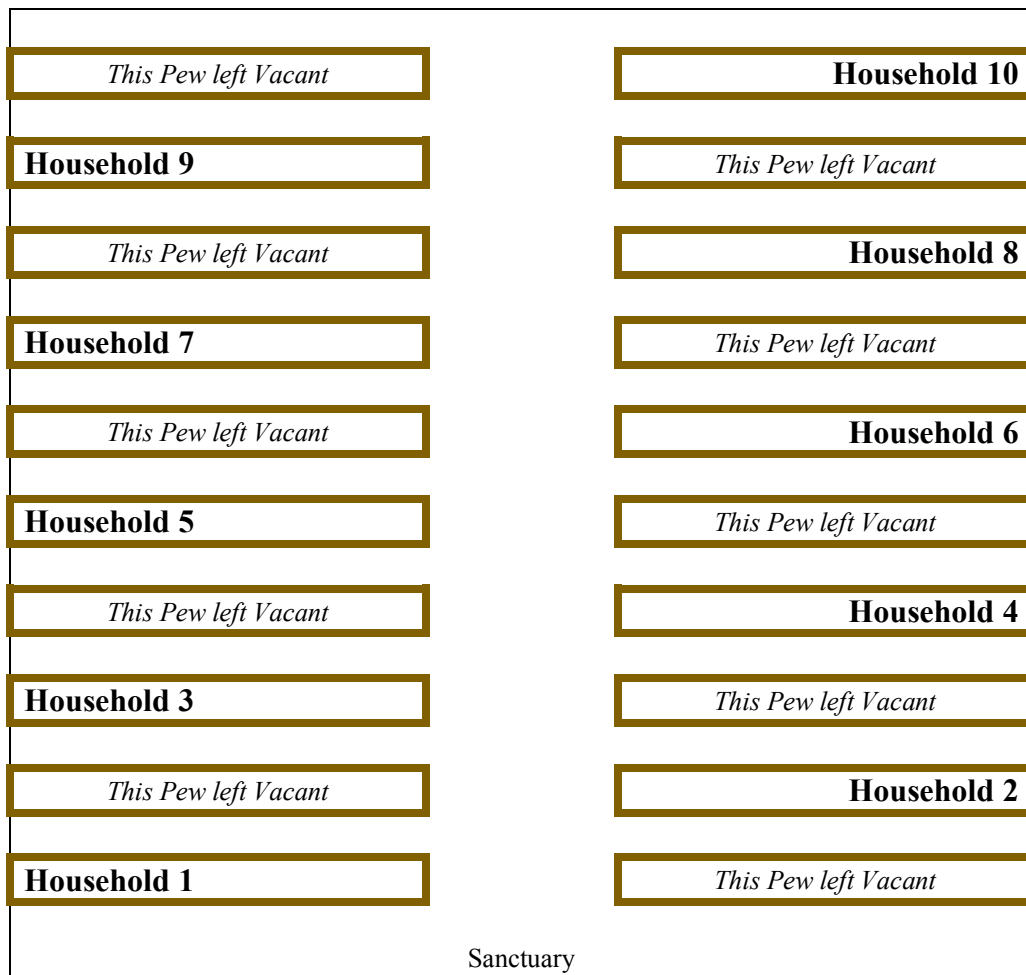
To the extent practicable, remove and store all non-essential items from public spaces so that there are fewer surfaces to touch. No water should be left in the Font or in any Holy Water stoop. Votives and other public use, high touch liturgical items should be removed or use thereof prohibited. All prayer books, hymn books, Bibles, envelopes, pamphlets and other items are to be removed from pew racks during this time.

The more items and objects removed from the gathering space the less that has to be cleaned. The fewer items and objects that people can handle and touch helps reduce the risk of transmission.

Clear markers and spacing for seating to maintain physical distancing must be created. This exercise of marking out the pews will give the Parish the number of households (or “bubbles”) it can accommodate. Physical distance must be created between households – there is no requirement to create physical distance between people of the same household.

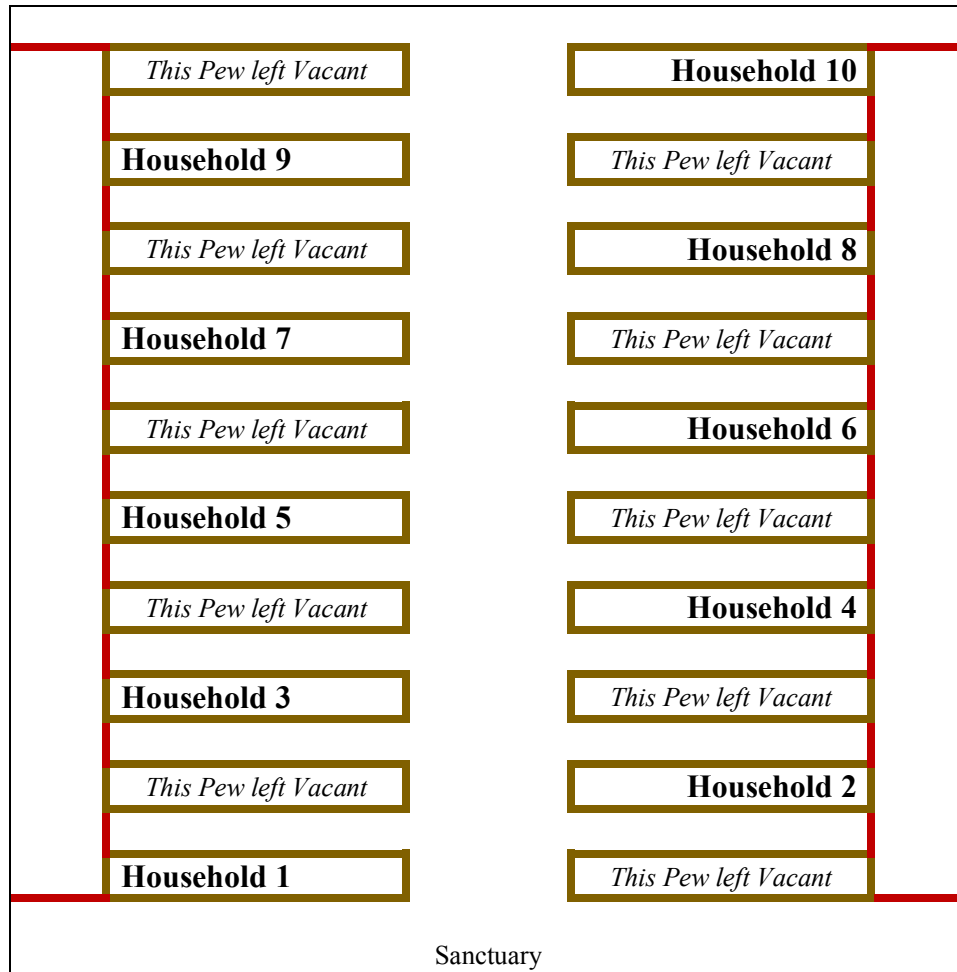
The best way to explain this process is by means of a few examples:

Church with Centre Aisle only:



In this Church Building, we can accommodate up to 10 Households (or “Bubbles”). Households sit tight to the wall leaving as much space as possible between them and the Centre Aisle. As per this example, the task force now realizes that their Church building can accommodate a maximum of 10 households at any given public worship gathering.

Church with Centre and Side Aisles:



In this Church Building, we can also accommodate up to 10 Households (or “Bubbles”). The Side Aisles are closed off using tape and signs to prevent access – do not use physical barriers as, in the event of an emergency, the side aisles can still be utilized for entrance or exit quickly. Households sit tight to the side aisle leaving as much space as possible between them and the Centre Aisle. As per this example, the task force now realizes that their Church building can accommodate a maximum of 10 households at any given public worship gathering.

Church with four banks of pews:



In this Church Building, we can accommodate up to 20 Households (or “Bubbles”). Households sat in pews along the wall (Households 11 to 15 and 16 to 20) sit tight to the wall leaving as much space as possible between them and the aisle. Those Households sat in the Centre Pews (Households 1 to 10) would sit in the centre of the pew leaving as much space as possible between them and the aisles on either side. As per this example, the task force now realizes that their Church building can accommodate a maximum of 20 households at any given public worship gathering.

Further to this, the maximum number of people allowed in the building at any gathering must not exceed 50 people. If we allot the Priest and an Assistant to lead the worship, an Organist to provide instrumental music, the Sexton to monitor and clean the bathrooms, the Facilitator to oversee the gathering, the Greeter to greet people, then the total number of people constituting all households (or “bubbles”) cannot exceed 44 people.

The Task Force should then take an inventory of cleaning and sanitation supplies. Parishes will need:

- Disinfectant for high touch hard surfaces (Pews, doorknobs, railings, etc.). These are surfaces normally touched primarily by the hand.
- Cleaner for other hard surfaces (floors, etc.). These are surfaces not normally touched by the hand but of which people have come in contact.
- Hand Sanitizer (containing at least 60 per cent alcohol)
- Disposable Paper masks
- Soap for bathrooms
- Paper towel for bathrooms

The Task Force will also need to ensure that there is a supplier identified that can keep the Parish inventories of these items fully stocked and available as needed.

At the entrance to the building, visible and accessible to those entering, should be placed paper masks and hand sanitizer. Another mask and hand sanitizer station(s) should be set up inside the seating area (nave) itself. Another station will need to be set up in the Chancel/Sanctuary area for use by the Priest and Worship Leaders.

All Bathrooms should be fully stocked with soap and paper towel for hand washing. Washrooms without warm running water available for handwashing should be closed. Hand Dryers and Blowers should be disconnected or use thereof disabled. ***Hand Dryers are not effective against Covid-19 and their use is discouraged by the World Health Organization.***

Garbage receptacles should have their covers removed so as the bins can be used without having to touch them.

Signs should be placed throughout the Building. More specifically:

Entrance

- Signs should be placed informing the public that they must be pre-registered to attend a worship service and that “drop in” visitors are not permitted at this time;
- Signs asking attendees to sanitize their hands upon entering the building;
- Signs inviting attendees to wear a mask if desired noting that children under the age of 2, those who have breathing difficulties (such as asthma), and those that are unable to remove the mask without another person’s help should refrain from using a mask;
- Signs asking attendees to respect physical distancing and to refrain from physical touching while in the building (hugging, shaking hands, etc.);
- Signs containing the text of Appendix A;
- The following signs as found at

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/business-supports/printable-resources-for-businesses/>



Bathrooms

- The following signs as found at

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/business-supports/printable-resources-for-businesses/>



Seating Area (nave)

- Signs asking people to remain in their pews while in the Building;
- Signs reminded people that Singing is not permitted at this time;
- Signs to remind people that dismissal will be done in an organized fashion;
- Signs containing the text of Appendix A
- The following signs as found at

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/business-supports/printable-resources-for-businesses/>



Preparing for each Gathering

Once the Task Force has set up the Building for reopening, the remaining guidelines found in this document must occur before each and every gathering of public worship:

Sexton

Before any gathering, there must be a thorough cleaning of the entire church building, if not already done so since the last gathering. Care must be taken to adequately clean and disinfect high touch surfaces especially, including pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and stair railings. The Sexton must insure adherence to the Guidance from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with respects to the Cleaning and Disinfection of Public Spaces:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-NL.pdf>

Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms that this product is approved for use in Canada. Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer’s instructions.

Please note that, for indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces by spraying or fogging (also known as fumigation or misting) is not recommended nor effective against COVID-19.

Facilitator

Communication regarding your worship schedule and how to register will need to be communicated to the members of the Parish, and the general public where possible. This communication should also stress that “drop in” visitation is not permitted at this time and that those who have travelled outside the province in the last 14 days, or those who have symptoms of Covid-19, are not permitted to attend worship at this time. The Facilitator will need to explore and undertake many ways, recruiting help where possible, to extend this communication as broadly as possible within your community.

Communication and education surrounding Covid-19 and the efforts your Parish are undertaking to keep everyone safe will be key to fostering understanding throughout the community. Many people may have the wrong impression that the Church is reopen and that everything is as it used to be. Others may be feeling apprehensive about returning to public worship. Communication, compassion, and patience will be critical at this initial phase and in the time to come.

Registrar

The means for households to register to attend a particular service will need to be explored and set up. Registration will need to happen prior to the service – registration at the door is not advised. The suggested means to register would be by telephone, email, and/or an online registration form. When registering, people will need to provide their name, phone number, and the date they wish to attend. They should also indicate who from their household (or “bubble”) will be attending with them. This is so we know how many people will be within a designated seating area. We must insure that we do not exceed the number of households we can accommodate safely nor that we exceed the 50-person limit.

An example of a Registration record would be as follows:

Sunday, October 1, 2020 10:30am			
			Building Tally (50 Max)
Staff & Volunteers			
Rector	Rev Christopher Fowler	Telephone: 999-9999	1
Lector	Ruby Kocurko	Telephone: 999-9999	2
Facilitator	Susan Haskell	Telephone: 999-9999	3
Greeters	Amelia Fowler &	Telephone: 999-9999	5
	Abigail Sullivan	Telephone: 999-9999	
Sexton	Derrick Gullage	Telephone: 999-9999	6
Organist	Leah Corcoran	Telephone: 999-9999	7
Household 1			
Name:	Robert Fowler	Telephone: 999-9999	9
Names of others attending from same household:	Cynthia Fowler		
Household 2			
Name:	Robert Haskell	Telephone: 999-9999	13
Names of others attending from same household:	Beverly Haskell		
	Denise Haskell		
	Nicholas Haskell		
Household 3			
Name	Jeff Drover	Telephone: 999-9999	16
Names of others attending from same household:	Kim Drover		
	Ellis Drover		
Household 4			
Name	Robert Hart	Telephone: 999-9999	21
Names of others attending from same household	Lisa Hart		
	Justin Hart		
	Emily Hart		
	Amanda Hart		

In this example, the Church building can only accommodate 4 households. Thus, we reached our maximum capacity because the 4 designated pews have been accounted for on this particular

Sunday. Although we haven't reached the maximum of 50 people, we have reached our maximum number of households.

In this example, we have acquired the necessary information for our records as to who was present in the building during this service: the names and telephone numbers of each person present in the building.

When receiving registration, the people registering should insure that they, and the members of their household (whether attending or not), have not travelled outside the province in the last 14 days and that no one within the household are feeling sick or displaying symptoms of Covid-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 include loss of speech or movement, chest pain or pressure, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, unexplained rash on your skin, loss of taste or smell, headache, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, sore throat, aches and pains. It is recommended that anyone planning on attending worship should complete the Covid-19 Self-Assessment found at:

<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment/>

People registering should also be cautioned that, if they are over the age of 60 or have an underlying medical condition, they should consider delaying their return to worship.

People registering will need to expressly agree to the text of Appendix A either electronically or verbally depending on whether registration is completed online or by telephone.

This list should then be provided to the Greeter who will then confirm those that attended on that date. The Greeter will then return the list to the Registrar who will keep this list on file for a period of 14 days following the date that those people attended. We have been asked by the Chief Medical Officer to maintain such a record in case a potential exposure occurs and contact tracing is needed. Following the 14-day period, the list should be destroyed (electronic copies deleted and paper copies shredded).

Cleric

Adjustments to how various liturgies are conducted will need to be considered. The liturgy will need to be carefully planned out and discerning thought given as to people involved, movement, physical distance, and hygiene, amongst other things. Preparing and conducting the liturgy, and other more specific liturgical considerations are attached to this document. The Cleric and other worship leaders will need to be informed of this guidance, and clear communication between all involved in worship will be essential to insure the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer, and the direction of the Bishop, is fully adhered to. It is suggested that the Members of the Task Force be well versed in these considerations as well.

During the time of Worship

The time has come for members of the faith community to gather for worship.

Just prior to people arriving, the Facilitator should reduce the number of doors that people must touch to enter the Service by propping, and leaving open, all doorways using doorstops. The Facilitator should also increase, as much as possible while not compromising the comfort of those attending, the amount of ventilation in the gathering space by opening doors and windows.

The Greeter(s) should place any one time use Bulletins or Orders of Service in the designated pews prior to people arriving.

A collection plate should be placed for people to give their offerings. Passing of the Collection Plate during the Service is not permitted.

Members of the Task Force, if present throughout the time of worship, should wear a mask, if possible. As they may come in close contact with others, and may not always be able to maintain physical distancing, the use of a mask is recommended.

As people arrive, the Greeter(s) should check the names of those attending. The Registrar should have provided a registration list for the service and the Greeter will need to confirm what people on that list actually attended. The Greeter should ask those arriving to sanitize their hands and, for those who desire to use one, provide a non-medical mask. The Greeter should also point out, and ask people to make themselves aware of, the signage throughout the building. Also offer to answer any questions they may have at this time.

The Facilitator can then seat the members of the household:

Seating should begin in the pew **furthest away** from the point of entry and continuing to the point of entry.

Upon seating the members of the household, the Facilitator should remind them that they should remain in their pew throughout the service, singing is not permitted due to increased risk of spread of the virus, that bathrooms are available for use if necessary and that handwashing is required following the use of the bathroom, and that people should remain seated once the Service is over – the Facilitator will inform the household when it is time to leave. If the household should have any questions, or need any assistance during the service, they should raise their hand or signal to one of the volunteers. A volunteer will come to them to offer assistance.

The Greeter and Facilitator should be aware of common spaces where people may congregate. People are to be reminded of physical distancing and redirect people so as to discourage congregating whenever possible.

The Sexton should be stationed near the bathrooms and have available disinfectant. When a person has exited a bathroom, the Sexton should disinfect: any door handles and locking mechanisms, the toilet seat and flush handle, the faucet and sink basin, and any other surfaces which reasonably could have come in contact with a person's hand (such as support railings for the disabled). This should be just a quick disinfecting of high probability touch areas. Once completed, the bathroom can be made available for use to the next person.

Just prior to the Service beginning, the Facilitator should announce to those gathered the guidance that all should adhere to while in the building. This should be done using a microphone exclusively set aside for the Facilitator (microphones – be it lapel, stationary, or hand held - are not to be shared and people should not “throw” their voice as it is considered a high-risk activity). If such a microphone is not available, then the person leading the worship should complete the announcement using their own microphone. A suggested script is as follows:

“I would like to take this moment to welcome you. As our worship is about to begin, I wish to remind you of the practices now in place to insure everyone’s safety and well-being. We ask that for the duration of the Service that you remain in your seats. Bathrooms are available for use if needed. If necessary to go to the washroom, we ask that you make your way to and from the bathroom being conscious to keep proper physical distancing between yourself and others. A copy of our Liturgy and Bulletin has been placed in your pew for your use and we ask that you take that with you when you leave, along with any masks, to dispose of at home. No physical touching outside of your household is advised, so we ask that you greet one another with a wave or a nod. There is an offering plate provided at the entry/exit if you wish to make an offering today. Singing is not permitted during the Service. There will be no nursery, Sunday School, or coffee hour following the service. Children are asked to remain in their pew and with their caregivers throughout the Service. When the service has concluded, we ask that you leave the building directly and not mingle or socialize. We will exit by having the back pew on my left exit first, then the one on my right, and so forth up through the church until everyone has vacated. We thank you for your understanding and adherence to this guidance and in doing your part to keep us all safe and well. Should you have any questions, or need any assistance during the Service, please garner my attention and I will be happy to assist.”

When the Service has concluded the Facilitator should begin dismissing the Congregation, one pew at a time, beginning with the pew closest to the point of exit and continuing away from the point of exit. The Greeter(s) should insure people leave directly and do not stop to socialize.

Once everyone has left the building, the offerings can be counted and processed, being sure to disinfect the hands once that has occurred and to keep the hands away from the face at all times while handling the offerings. It is not certain how long COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Preliminary information on COVID-19 suggests that the virus may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days depending on different conditions.

Single use Bulletins and Orders of Service, as well as anything left behind in the pews, should be removed and discarded. The person doing so will need to wash their hands immediately following the tidying up of the pews and be conscious of keeping their hands away from their face while performing this task.

A note should be made with respects to holding multiple services in one day. If multiple gatherings are held on a single day, the start and end times must allow for attendees who are exiting one gathering to avoid contact with those arriving for the next gathering. **There must also be sufficient time for cleaning and disinfection between gatherings. It is NOT advisable to attempt to hold more than one service in the same building on a Sunday morning.** For multi-point Parishes, maybe consider holding one service in each building inviting parishioners to register for a service

regardless of the building it is held in. For single point Parishes, it is recommended that services be no closer in frequency than one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and/or one in the evening.

In all instances, there MUST be a thorough cleaning of the entire church building, especially high touch surfaces, including pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and stair railings, AFTER EVERY PUBLIC GATHERING. This must be done in adherence to the Guidance from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with respects to the Cleaning and Disinfection of Public Spaces.

Parish Offices

Staff members must be permitted to work from home, if they wish. While some staff may wish to work from Parish premises, vulnerable individuals should be discouraged from doing so. In-office functions must still be minimal, focusing effort and activity only on essential operations. All meetings must be held online or by telephone. Any staff members or volunteers working from church-owned buildings must continue to follow social distancing and sanitary guidelines. Vestry, Parish Council or other teams/ministry committees must continue to be held online.

Building Use by User Groups and Rentals

During this time the use of church buildings by all user groups is suspended. The rental of Church Buildings for public gatherings or social events remains prohibited. Rental tenants continue to be invited to suspend their operations and may only operate if permitted by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and if being fully compliant with all Public Health Regulations and Guidance. The Diocese should be informed of any Rental Tenants of Church Buildings who are authorized and wish to resume operations. Permission to resume operations within Church properties will require the permission of the Diocese once assured that the conditions previously stated have been met and adherence to the same is assured.

Formation, Fellowship & Fund-Raising Activities

We are all aware of the importance Formation, Fellowship, and Fund-Raising Activities have in the life of our communities. They provide invaluable contributions towards building community, building faith, and providing much needed resources towards ministry. Unfortunately, at this time, all such activities must remain suspended or provided for online. We continue to consult with the Chief Medical Officer and review the ever-changing guidance and direction from the Government in this regard. We continue to monitor the restricted application of these activities in other jurisdictions for adaptation to our own use within the restrictions we are mandated to adhere to. We continue to research and explore new and imaginative ways to facilitate these activities in our current circumstances. As the Fall Season approaches, and Parishes would normally be undertaking many of these activities, we hope to have further guidance available in this regard.

Task Force Checklist

This checklist should not replace a thorough reading and understanding of this document. This checklist is provided for convenience and as a “second check” that necessary tasks are completed.

Prior to the first gathering for public worship:

- Remove and store all non-essential items from public spaces including high touch liturgical items and all items from the pew racks.
- Create clear markers and spacing for seating to maintain physical distancing.
- Take an inventory of cleaning and sanitation supplies and ensure that there is a supplier identified.
- Set up mask and sanitizer stations as outlined in the Guidelines, ensure bathrooms are fully stocked, and remove covers from garbage receptacles.
- Place signs throughout the building as outlined in the Guidelines.
- Communicate to the Parish and General Public regarding your worship schedule and how to register. Communicate and educate about Covid-19 and the efforts your Parish are undertaking to keep everyone safe.

Before each and every Gathering:

- Complete a thorough cleaning of the entire church building if not already done so following the last gathering held.
- Pre-register attendees prior to the Service and provide this list to the Greeter for confirmation as people arrive.
- Plan and organize the liturgy within the Guidelines. Create one time use Bulletins, digital copies, or projections of the liturgy. Place any one time use bulletins in the designated pews prior to people arriving.

Continued...

During each and every Gathering:

- Prop open doors and increase ventilation.
- Place the Collection plate in the common area for people's offerings.
- Confirm those attending by indicating the same on the pre-registration list provided by the Registrar.
- Greet and instruct attendees as they arrive.
- Seat attendees by household as outlined in the guidelines.
- Monitor common areas to avoid and discourage congregating.
- Sexton to be stationed at bathrooms to quickly disinfect common touch areas between users.
- Announce to congregation, just prior to the liturgy starting, the expectations to maintain safety and well-being while in the building.
- Monitor and respond to requests for assistance throughout the Service.

At the conclusion of each and every Gathering:

- Dismiss the congregation as outlined in the Guidelines.
- Monitor common areas to avoid and discourage congregating.
- Count and process the offerings in a safe manner.
- Discard single use bulletins and anything left behind in the pews.
- Clean and Disinfect the Building according to Guidelines.
- Return the Registration list to the Registrar to keep on file for a 14-day period following the date of the Service.

Permission to Reopen a Church Building(s)

Parish: _____

Church Building(s) requesting to be reopened:

Reopening date requested: _____

Please complete the next page with the Names of the Members of your Parish Task Force, their phone numbers and email addresses.

I certify that a copy of “**Many Members, One Body (Rom. 12:4-5): Guidelines for Safe Practices in Anglican East NL in the time of COVID-19**” have been provided to the Wardens of the Parish and every member of the Parish Task Force. We have read and understood the expectations placed upon us as contained with this document.

Signature of Rector/Priest-in-Charge

Scan and email this page, and the page containing the Names and Contact Information of the Members of your Parish Task Force to the Executive Officer (archdeaconsamrose@gmail.com). Once the Bishop has reviewed and approved for your buildings to reopen, you will be notified by the Executive Officer. **No Church building in this Diocese may reopen for public use until the Parish has received direct permission from the Bishop to proceed.**

Please note: If a Parish has decided NOT to reopen any of its Church Buildings at this time, please contact the Executive Officer by email (archdeaconsamrose@gmail.com) indicating the Name of the Parish and a brief description as to the reasons why the decision was made to not reopen.

	Cleric(s)	Facilitator(s)	Greeter(s)	Registrar(s)	Sexton(s)
Name					
Phone					
Email					
Name					
Phone					
Email					
Name					
Phone					
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Preparing and Conducting the Liturgy

How we prepare and conduct every one of our liturgies has to be examined and, in many instances, aspects of those liturgies will need to be reimagined. This may seem like a daunting task to say the least, yet a worthwhile exercise is to “walk through” each liturgy within your mind making note of those instances where high risk activity would occur (physical touching, compromise of physical spacing, singing, and other noted considerations).

It is impossible to try to address every element of every liturgy covering the varied liturgical practices and nuances of every parish and congregation. It will be up to the Presider to deliberately and carefully think out and plan each liturgy to insure every possible measure is taken to provide for everyone’s safety. Some general guidelines should remain foremost in mind:

- Physical distancing, and the maintenance thereof, of all people throughout the time of worship;

- Eliminating instances of physical touching between people, especially those of differing households;

- Eliminating instances where objects are passed between people, such as offering plates, books, cruets, and such;

- Reducing the amount of movement during the liturgy, especially in instances where physical distancing will be compromised between those moving and those stationary;

- The sharing of microphones (be it lapel, stationary, or hand held) is prohibited** and thus Readers, Intercissors, and others must be minimized. To reduce the amount of movement, such participants should be seated at, or with, their microphone prior to the start of the service, and should remain there until the service is concluded;

- Singing and playing wind/brass instruments is not recommended, due to increased risk of spread of virus with these activities. If such activities must occur they should be performed by as few people as possible who are positioned at least 12 feet from each other and other staff or volunteers. There must be no sharing of instruments or microphones. Choirs are not permitted. Congregational singing is discouraged.

- Participants can hum, where appropriate.

Because we know that longer exposure indoors increases the risk of transmitting the virus, consideration must be made towards a more brief worship service. Of further note is that projecting the voice has much the same effect as singing and, as such, people should speak in a “normal” conversational tone. In those instances where people are inclined to project their voice, further physical distance (12 feet) is required.

In this section we will further outline some general guidelines and practicalities and then follow up with considerations with respects to specific liturgies.

General Guidelines

Online worship and formation opportunities for those that will still be unable to join an in-person gathering, either due to risk or sense of safety, should be continued.

Liturgical processions should be minimized or avoided. Processions can easily, and inadvertently compromise physical distancing and is considered a high-risk activity. If a procession is necessary, the number of people processing should be minimal, physical distancing observed between those

moving in procession, and physical distancing between those moving and those stationary must be maintained. It is also advised that those processing use masks if possible.

Participants in the Liturgy should be kept to a minimum, the number of which should be determined by what is essential to properly conduct the liturgy. A suggestion is to restrict participation in the liturgy to the Presider, a Lector, and the Organist. All participants must maintain physical distancing whether seated in the sanctuary or chancel or nave. Movement throughout the Church during the Liturgy should be minimized. In those times when movement is necessary, care must be taken to maintain physical distancing between the person moving and those who are stationary. Microphones cannot be shared between individuals due to the difficulty of cleaning and disinfecting these devices.

There is no physical touching during any portion of in-person worship. An offering of The Peace may still be a part of the liturgy, yet should only be exchanged in word or by means of a bow or nod. The Congregation must be instructed and reminded that they are not to move from their pews during worship. Other instances of physical touching, such as in the Sacrament of Marriage or Baptism, will need to be reimagined. Some of those instances are addressed in the specifics that follow.

There is no passing of an offering plate or other objects through the pews. Parishioners may offer financial gifts online or to a stationary plate as they come in or exit. There is to be no procession or presentation of gifts (the Offering Plate should remain where placed for people's offerings and the gifts of bread and wine should be kept at the Credence Table). The Prayer Over the Gifts could still be offered, yet made more general, much as is found in the BCP, using 1 Chronicles 29.10, 11, 14.

The congregation and the officiant are required to refrain from singing when gathered for in-person worship. Singing is among the riskier behaviors when it comes to spreading the virus. Additionally, no wind or brass instruments may be used in worship. "Throwing" the voice (raising the voice above a normal tone so as it can be heard) is also a part of that riskier behavior and should be avoided. If such activities must occur they should be performed by as few people as possible who are positioned at least 12 feet from each other and other staff or volunteers. There must be no sharing of instruments or microphones. Choirs are not permitted. Congregational singing is discouraged. Participants can hum, where appropriate.

To avoid crowding and bottle necks, there is no receiving line following a service or shaking hands at the doorway. The congregation should disperse as was explained previously in this document.

There is no nursery, Sunday school, Godly Play, coffee hour, or other such gatherings before, during, or after the Service. The congregation should disperse as was explained previously in this document. Everyone, including children, should remain in their pews throughout the Service.

As common use books (BAS, BCP, Hymnals, Bibles) and materials are not permitted to be used, the liturgy will need to be provided by means of a single use bulletin, by the use of screen and projection, or by sending digital copies for people to access on their personal devices.

Liturgical Considerations

More specific mention should be made with regards to the following:

Celebrations of the Eucharist

Sharing of the Common Cup, either for consuming or touching, is NOT permitted at this time. Communion can only be administered in one-kind.

All gifts necessary for the preparation of the Eucharist should be at the Credence Table. The Presider should prepare for the Eucharist at the Credence Table without the assistance of a Server or Eucharistic Assistant. To do so would compromise physical distancing as well as the touching of common objects.

At the time of Administration of the Eucharist, the Presider should, after receiving, don a mask, disinfect their hands and proceed to the nearest designated pew. Those wishing to receive should hold out their hands and the host should be placed upon the hand **WITHOUT MAKING CONTACT** between the Presider's hand and the Communicant's hand. If contact occurs, the Presider will need to disinfect their hands once more before proceeding further with the Administration. For those who do not wish to receive, they should fold their arms across their chest at which the Presider may bless them by either holding their hand over the head (without touching) or making the sign of the cross over them (without touching). Placing the host within a communicant's mouth is NOT permitted. The Presider will proceed through the pews until all have received. Upon returning to the Altar, the Presider will disinfect their hands once more and then remove their mask. The Host and Chalice may be Abluted by the Presider alone at this time or veiled to be Abluted following the liturgy.

For larger congregations, the use of a second person to administer can be considered. The Presider should serve one side of the building while the second person serves the other. This ensures physical distancing between the two people administering as they move throughout the Church. The Presider, once he or she has received, will disinfect their hands, prepare the second vessel for administration, don a mask, disinfect their hands once more, and leave the second vessel on the Altar. Once the Presider has entered the first pew to administer, the second person may then proceed to the Altar, don a mask, disinfect their hands and proceed to the other side of the Congregation. The second person will need to follow these guidelines as closely as the Presider. Once administration is completed, the Presider should wait for the second person to place their vessel upon the Altar, disinfect their hands, remove their mask, and return to their seat prior to proceeding back to the Altar.

The Celebration of Holy Baptism

In preparing a candidate and their family for Holy Baptism, it is important that interaction with the candidate/families be done as safely as possible. This might mean meeting, at least initially, via video link or talking on the telephone. If face to face meetings are held, ensure that everyone adheres to physical distancing requirements and that numbers are limited, preferably to a minimum. Such meetings should not be held in the house of anyone who is self-isolating or who is in a vulnerable group.

A discussion with the family regarding restrictions on the number of people able to be present should be had. The limitation on numbers might be very difficult to convey sensitively to new parents, but it is important that clergy do not feel pressured into making exceptions. The candidate, his/her parents, godparents and the cleric are all that are required to be present for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Some may choose to postpone the Baptism until all their guests can be invited

to attend. In many cases, the restrictions on numbers may mean that the Baptism cannot take place during public worship. Consideration could be made for a live stream of the service (if facilities exist) or a recording of the service may be possible and such recording made available to family and friends not present. Family and friends who are a part of the vulnerable population should be discouraged from attending. People who are feeling unwell, or self-isolating, are not permitted to attend.

During the Service, the cleric should not hold the baby, but ask a parent to do so for the duration of the service. Only the clergy and parents should be at the Font while godparents maintain physical distance. When blessing the water, the cleric should not make contact with the water. While one parent holds the infant, the other parent can pour the water over the infant's forehead and make the sign of the cross at the appropriate times with the cleric speaking the words "We baptize you..." and "We sign you with the cross...". The parent should also be the one to wipe the forehead of the baptized with a single use cloth or paper towel which should be kept by the parent using it and disposed of once they get home. If a candle is lit as part of the ceremony, this should be done by one of the Godparents without any intermediary. The cleric would still be the one to speak the words "Receive the light of Christ...".

Baptism liturgies with multiple candidates are prohibited at this time for the fact that the water of Baptism cannot be used upon more than one person. Once a baptism is complete, the water must be disposed of and not used for other baptisms or other purposes.

The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage

As with Baptisms, A discussion with the couple regarding restrictions on the number of people able to be present should be had. The limitation on numbers might be very difficult to convey sensitively to couples, but it is important that clergy do not feel pressured into making exceptions. Some may choose to postpone the Wedding until all their guests can be invited to attend. Consideration could be made for a live stream of the service (if facilities exist) or a recording of the service may be possible and such recording made available to family and friends not present. Family and friends who are a part of the vulnerable population should be discouraged from attending. People who are feeling unwell, or self-isolating, are not permitted to attend. You might wish to suggest that if the wedding goes ahead with restricted numbers, there could be a blessing in the year ahead with all guests present.

In preparing the couple, it is important that interaction be done as safely as possible. This might mean meeting, at least initially, via video link or talking on the telephone. If face to face meetings are held, ensure that everyone adheres to physical distancing requirements and such meetings are restricted to the couple and the cleric only. Such meetings should not be held in the house of anyone who is self-isolating or who is in a vulnerable group.

Couples should be counselled on the numbers constituting the Wedding Party. It is advised to minimize the number of people gathered in the front of the Church and processing/recessing. Physical distance guidelines will have to dictate how this can or cannot be accommodated. The couple and their two witnesses are all that is required to stand at the steps with the remaining members of the Party distanced in the front pews.

A thorough cleaning of the Church (according to Public Health Guidelines as outlined earlier in this document) will need to take place prior to the rehearsal and following the rehearsal. Participants in the rehearsal should be restricted to those necessary. Family Members and spectators are not permitted to attend unless involved in the ceremony. Physical distancing during the rehearsal will need to be maintained.

Careful consideration must be made regarding processions and positioning of wedding parties so as physical distancing can be adhered to at all times, not only between those moving but also between those moving and those stationary. It is advised that the couple be the only one to process and/or recess, ensuring attendees are seated in a way that they are physically distant from the couple as they process or recess.

Apart from the couple, physical distance should be observed as far as possible. Please note that the priest does not have to touch the rings to bless them, nor does he or she have to touch the couple's hands as part of a prayer or blessing (the tying of the knot). The rings can be placed upon the cleric's book by the person in possession of the rings, blessed without touching them, and then the couple can retrieve them from the book.

All those signing the register should sanitize their hands before signing, complete all the signatures necessary for them and then sanitize them again. Apart from the couple, all those signing should maintain physical distancing if practicable and individual pens for each signatory should be used. No receiving lines are permitted. It should also be reiterated that singing is prohibited, the use of wind or brass instruments are not permitted, and the sharing of microphones are not allowed. If such activities must occur they should be performed by as few people as possible who are positioned at least 12 feet from each other and other staff or volunteers. There must be no sharing of instruments or microphones. Choirs are not permitted. Congregational singing is discouraged. Participants can hum, where appropriate. These restrictions will have implications for how the liturgy is planned.

The Funeral Liturgy

There is not anything more to add aside from what already has been outlined elsewhere.

Funerals present one of the most urgent, difficult and often cruelest tensions that exist between the realities of human need and the demands that must be met within the midst of a pandemic. When a loved one dies, our natural human desire is to be surrounded by others in order to experience their comfort and support through presence, touch, prayer and a common acknowledge of grief and loss. It is also known that during the current outbreak of COVID-19, the very gatherings and contact desired by those who grieve are precisely what must be avoided, or at the very least restricted. This tension may not be readily acknowledged by those suffering from the bewilderment, pain and agony of grief. The challenge for those leading funerals is with gentleness and compassion to enable those who mourn to find ways though the realities of the current situation that acknowledges both their needs as people who grieve and the needs of the whole community to remain safe and well. This poses a phenomenal challenge for those charged with taking funerals. Where possible, the expectations and needs of those who mourn should be satisfied, while at the same time holding in place the good practice needed to enable the safety of the whole community at this time. Coordination between the cleric, the funeral director, and the family is crucial. Any changes to the normal service should be explained by the officiant to the family. Consider whether a memorial service could be held at some point in the future, which is an opportunity for more people to come together once Government guidance permits.

Although these considerations will impact the look of any liturgy, the safety of all involved must be of paramount importance. Creative thinking around the liturgy will be necessary. There will no doubt be complaints about the ways we will need to do things. People will want to do what they have always done. They will pine for the way things were. Yet now we are given a rare opportunity

to revisit our long tradition—the centuries of ways we have worshipped and prayed—and receive from the vast array of gifts of the Spirit among us here and now.

Pastoral Care Considerations during Covid-19

In-person Pastoral Care should continue to be avoided and should only be provided in instances of urgent or emergent circumstances. **Even then, the visit should only be done if the cleric is comfortable with doing so.** The wearing of a mask, if possible, enhanced hygiene practice, and physical distancing should be adhered to in these situations. **At no time should an in-person Pastoral Visit be conducted with anyone who is symptomatic and self isolating due to travel, illness, or infection of Covid-19.** Visits by community clergy to Eastern Health Facilities and Personal Care Homes are not permitted and are still restricted to those designated by the Health Authority or those having received an official exemption by the Chief Medical Officer.

In-person Home Communion are not permitted at this time as it compromises that person's "bubble" and contravenes Public Health Directives.

Pastoral Care should continue to be offered through letters, cards, telephone, or video conferencing. Imagination and creativity should be employed to remain in contact with those of our communities who are shut-in or alone. An idea, considering the warmer temperatures and pleasant weather, and where practical, would be to arrange a "front step visit" or "window visit" making sure to maintain physical distance with the person you are visiting.

Other Resources

The following listing contains useful resources for consideration as we re-open our church buildings. There are also useful resources as we work towards reimagining and adapting our liturgy and worship. Other resources provide information on Covid-19 as well as tools for applying best practices. *In instances where these resource materials disagree or conflict with the contents of this document, this document will take precedence.*

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>

The hub of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with respects to the response to Covid-19.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/business-supports/printable-resources-for-businesses/>

This site contains printable versions of the posters mentioned previously.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Physical-Distancing-for-Businesses.pdf>

This is a Guidance Document provided by the Government to Business with respects to Physical Distancing.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-NL.pdf>

This is a Guidance Document provided by the Government with respects to Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Settings.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/disinfectant-sanitizers-cleaners-soaps.html>

More information, from Health Canada, regarding disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners, and soaps effective against Covid-19.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Guidance-on-Cloth-Masks-Non-Medical-Masks.pdf>

This is a Guidance Document provided by the Government with respects to Cloth (Non-Medical) Masks.

<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment/>

This is a self-assessment tool for use by the general public to determine if you should be tested for Covid-19.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

This is the hub for the Government of Canada with respects to Covid-19.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

This is the hub for the World Health Organization with respects to Covid-19.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

A site of the Church of England providing some resources and guidance surrounding Covid-19.

<https://www.reopeningthechurch.com>

A site released by the Humanitarian Disaster Institute and National Association of Evangelicals with some useful resources and considerations surrounding the re-opening of Church Buildings.

**Appendix A:
CHURCH ATTENDANCE RULES**

Vulnerable persons (over the age of 60 or at risk due to an underlying medical condition), are at greater risk to their health and life if they contract COVID 19. If you are a vulnerable person, carefully consider if you should attend an in-person worship service.

You must register prior to attendance and by so doing accept and agree to abide by these rules and other directions given to you by parish authorities.

Attendance is at your own risk.

Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more with all outside your household.

Use hand sanitizers provided before taking your seat.

Sit only in spaces designated by the parish.

Masks are recommended.

No singing.

No physical touching with other attendees other than those in your household.

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