

St. Mark's Re-Opening Guidelines

St. Mark's Church Council has now approved moving to Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Operations Plan. A schedule to resume various church activities has been established to allow for preparations and to monitor changes in local infection rates following the resumption of public-school education. The current schedule calls for the re-opening of the church office on Monday, September 14th, resuming in-person worship services on Sunday, September 27th, and resuming Sunday School activities on November 1st. This positive step and schedule is dependent on local infection rates remaining low.

Seating in the sanctuary will be designed to respect 2m physical distancing as recommended by public health authorities, and while current government orders allow for about 135 persons to attend on Sundays, our actual seating capacity is about half of that number, due to the increased spacing required between persons from different households.

The COVID-19 team will be creating an introductory "welcome back to church" video to show everyone what to expect upon entering the sanctuary. We continue to be optimistic that with additional precautions (wearing masks, physical distancing etc.), we will once again be able to safely gather on Sundays!

This is what Phase 3 will mean to you:

Phase Three – Eased Restrictions

- COVID-19 screening questions are posted at all doors, anyone with symptoms must not enter.
- Community masks are recommended to be worn by all, inside the building.
- All persons entering the church must sanitize their hands.
- Sign in sheets are located at the doors and attendance will be taken for contact tracing purposes.
- Physical distancing of 2m must be respected at all times.
- Traffic flow, where clearly marked, must be followed.
- Hymns must be hummed and not sung, due to the increased risk of spreading the virus.
- There will be "no touch" greetings, communion, passing of the peace etc.

- No coffee/social time will be available after services.
- Meetings and gatherings will be limited in size, following the 2m distancing guidelines.
- Online worship service will continue to be made available.
- Life rituals such as funerals can occur, but must be limited in attendance, such that 2m physical distancing is maintained at all times. Gathering size limits must respect government regulations, as they are adjusted.
- All office functions can resume, with physical visits from the public, and subject to 2m physical distancing and wearing of community masks. The wearing of masks should not be considered as an acceptable alternative to 2m physical distancing.
- Should you develop COVID-19 symptoms within 2 weeks of your last visit to the church, advise the office immediately and do not visit the church building.

Please contact the office if you have any questions, or email covid19@stmarkswhitby.ca.