

## **Worship During COVID-19 Implementation and Maintenance Plan – St Luke’s**

### **References:**

- A. Declaration of Provincial State of Emergency by Minister, 22 March 2020 and subsequent renewals (<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/alerts-notice/#provincial-state-emergency>)
- B. Order by the Medical Officer of Health under Section 32 of the HEALTH PROTECTION ACT 2004, c,4, s.1., XX March 2020 and as amended
- C. Parish of Annapolis SafeR Church Policy, 18 May 2020
- D. Letter to the Clergy and People of the Diocese, Office of the Archbishop, Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, 27 May 2020
- E. Letter to the Clergy and People of the Diocese, Office of the Archbishop, Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, 17 June 2020
- F. Province of Nova Scotia, Communities, Culture and Heritage, COVID 19, Stakeholder and Guidance Document, undated, <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/CCH-COVID-19-Stakeholder-Guidance-Document.pdf>
- G. Province of Nova Scotia, Communities, Culture and Heritage, COVID 19, Prevention Guide for Event Organizers, Theatres and Performance Venues, undated, <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>

### **Situation**

1. The purpose of this document is to lay out the necessary actions to prepare and maintain a safe place of Worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. A separate plan will be developed for staff who routinely enter the Church or Annex.
2. This plan may be amended as requirements change.

### **Background**

3. The province of Nova Scotia declared a State of Emergency on 22 March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ref A). The declaration provides authorities under the Emergency Measures Act to protect the health and safety of citizens.
4. The Medical Officer of Health for the Province has issued an Order to decrease the risk to public health presented by COVID-19 (Ref B). This Order is updated periodically as the situation evolves and has clauses directly applicable to gathering for Worship.

5. The Archbishop of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island applies the Orders of the Province and provides further restrictions to Worship (Refs D and E). These restrictions may be amended as the Public Health Order (Ref B) changes.
6. The Wardens of the Parish of Annapolis, in consultation with the Rector, are responsible to apply the Orders of the Province and the Diocese to ensure Worship and activities conducted in the name of the Parish are done so in a safe and responsible manner.
7. The Parish of Annapolis' SafeR Church policy (Ref D) requires the Parish to take reasonable measures to safeguard those who may be vulnerable, in relation to inherent or foreseeable risks arising from our operations (ministries) or on the premises. This requirement must be viewed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and is a basis to establish local requirements to help ensure a safe environment.
8. Refs F and G are provincial guidelines and considerations for "faith gatherings" that provide a framework to build a re-opening plan. Where applicable, those guidelines have been incorporated in this plan.

### **Organization**

9. The Management Committee serves as the COVID-19 Action Team and is comprised of the following:
  - a. Wardens;
  - b. Rector;
  - c. Treasurer, and
  - d. Parish Council Secretary.

### **Responsibilities**

10. The COVID 19 Action Team will:
  - a. Determine the necessary actions to prepare and maintain a safe place of Worship during the pandemic;
  - b. Develop a re-opening and maintenance plan for Worship;
  - c. Determine, as necessary, any additional requirements or restrictions for weddings and funerals should they occur in the Parish during the pandemic;
  - d. Determine, notwithstanding public health orders or direction from a higher authority, what activities may resume or be conducted in the Parish or Parish facilities along with associated restrictions and limitations. This includes rental of facilities;
  - e. Keep up to date with best practices, public health orders and amend plans and activities as required; the provincial website on COVID-19 should be reviewed daily for changes, and

- f. Communicate actions and plans to the Parish.

### **Assumptions, Limitations and Caveats**

11. This plan does not remove personal responsibility from those attending Services to apply restrictions levied by all levels of government, especially requirements to self-isolate or seek medical attention if displaying the symptoms of COVID-19 or having contact with a person infected or suspected to be infected with COVID-19.
12. It is assumed the COVID-19 pandemic will continue for the foreseeable future. While cases may continue to diminish in Canada, other parts of the world are experiencing high rates of the virus. St Luke's will remain vulnerable.
13. It is to be expected that limits for gathering and other aspects of Worship will change periodically over the course of the pandemic. The Parish reserves the right to be more restrictive in applying public health orders. The congregation is largely in the vulnerable category. Therefore, any increase to gathering limits or relaxation of social distancing will require careful consideration by the COVID-19 Action Team before being implemented in the Parish.
14. As the Calendar draws closer to significant events such as Thanksgiving and Advent, the COVID-19 Action Team may have to consider additional requirements and limitations to ensure St Luke's remains a safe place to gather and Worship.

### **Execution**

15. **Phases.** The implementation and maintenance plan for re-opening and conducting Worship will be conducted in three phases:
  - a. Phase 1 - Preparation for Worship at St Luke's and the Parish Hall;
  - b. Phase 2 – Worship, and
  - c. Phase 3 – Maintenance and monitoring of facilities after re-opening.
16. **Phase 1 - Preparation for Re-opening of Worship at St Luke's and/or the Parish Hall:**
  - a. Remove all hymnals, prayer books and other papers from the hymnal racks and place in a suitable location;
  - b. For Service in the Parish Hall, place chairs to ensure social distancing requirements are met, with particular attention to the placement of the organist or any soloist. Soloists should be a minimum of 2 meters (12 feet) from any others (Ref G). The pianist should face away from the congregation (Ref G).
  - c. Place hand sanitizer at entry and exit points;
  - d. Place a sign reminding of social distancing at entry and exit points;

- e. Mark with tape, available seating in the Sanctuary, in accordance with current social distancing and gathering requirements - rope off closed pews;
- f. Place Collection Plates in convenient locations at entry or exit points;
- g. Ensure seating, high touch services and bathrooms are disinfected prior to the first service;
- h. Place disinfectant wipes or hand sanitizer in bathrooms; ensure adequate supply of hand towels and liquid soap are available. Place sign in washrooms requesting individuals sanitize any touched surfaces after use (such as taps, light switches, railings, door handles);
- i. Place COVID 19 recommended hygiene signs in bathrooms and bulletin boards;
- j. Place COVID 19 symptoms poster at entry points;
- k. Advise Parishioners of health and safety precautions being taken prior to first service;
- l. If attendance is likely to exceed seating limits, implement a “reservation” system for Worship;
- m. Have non-surgical masks available should a parishioner request one;
- n. Ensure Rector, organist and greeters are aware of requirements and are prepared to conduct their movements in accordance with social distancing requirements. Note, this will impact seating arrangements.

17. **Phase 2 – Worship:**

- a. Provide a checklist for Greeter(s) with health and safety instructions;
- b. If the Service is in St Luke’s, parishioners will enter by the front door only (not the Annex door); if the Service is in the Parish Hall, parishioners will enter by the main Hall door, facing St George Street;
- c. Provide a minimum of one Greeter per service; as attendance levels rise, it may be necessary to have more than one Greeter, especially if queuing begins outdoors.
- d. Greeter to maintain social distance;
- e. Greeter to ensure hand sanitizer or wipes are at entry and exit points of Service;
- f. Greeter to point out signs regarding symptoms of COVID-19;
- g. Greeter to place Order of Service at each seat in advance or at entry for pick-up;
- h. Greeter to record names of parishioners at each Service for the purpose of contact tracing, should contact training become necessary; retain the list for 6 weeks;
- i. Greeter to advise on the location of Collection plate – deposit on the way in or way out;
- j. Greeter to direct parishioners to marked seats – in St Luke’s, seat from front to back; on exit, exit from back to front; in the Parish Hall, seat based on configuration of the chairs to minimize people passing each other – once chairs are placed, they are **not** to be moved;
- k. If conducting consecutive same-day Services in St Luke’s Sanctuary, first Service should sit in the left and center left, and second Service on the right and center right, and

- I. Rector to review current safety precautions and restrictions during the Service, with particular attention to:
    - i. Washrooms;
    - ii. Passing the peace;
    - iii. No congregating or loitering after the Service, and
    - iv. Singing restrictions.
18. **Phase 3 – Maintenance of facilities:**
- a. If conducting consecutive Services on any given day in the same space, touch surfaces must be disinfected between Services;
  - b. Following the last Service of the day, the Cleaner will clean the Church prior to the next Service, to include the pews and chairs, with particular attention to high-touch surfaces. Note, this cleaning can occur on any day prior to the next Service or next use of the facility;
  - c. Following the last Service of the day, the Cleaner will clean the washrooms prior to the next Service, ensuring an adequate supply of paper towels, soap and disinfectant wipes or sanitizers are available, and
  - d. If the organ (or piano) are used, the Organist will clean the touched surfaces of the instrument.

## **Communications**

19. Communication of the restrictions and safety precautions being taken by the Parish will provide a level of confidence that will help parishioners decide when they want to resume Worship in the Church. Methods of reaching parishioners include:
- a. Facebook groups;
  - b. Email;
  - c. Phone;
  - d. Canada post mail, and
  - e. Sign on St George Street