

The COVID-19 Operation Plan for the Parish of Moncton

15 May 2020

Rationale

Dear friends in Christ,

As you know, our provincial government has authorized the reopening of Church Services with attendance of ten people or less. It is hoped that within the next three weeks that attendance number could be increased to fifty. However, our new normal will include health measures that have become household words, such as physical distancing; screening and monitoring; hand and respiratory hygiene; personal protective equipment; and cleaning and disinfection.

Since we are one body and members of one another – sisters and brothers in the Lord -- we are asked to bear one another's burdens, as family. There will be differing opinions among us about the necessary precautions required for public worship to resume in Church buildings. However, the scope of our opinions is not unlike that within the Church in Corinth during the debate over whether to eat meat that had been offered to idols. St. Paul offered this advice to those Christians: *"All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour."* (1 Corinthians 10. 23-25)

"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour." This highlights a basic responsibility: let us take precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to ourselves *and to others*. We must all come to Church at our own risk, but you may do so with the assurance that your brothers and sisters in Christ 'have your back' and are concerned for your welfare.

The following pages outline St. George's Operation Plan. It is required by the provincial government, and Bishop Edwards has requested that it be communicated in advance to parishoners. The Wardens and Vestry members have reviewed it and I commend it to you now.

Please note that there are no less than 17 Services each week at St. George's. In order to comply with the current order, you are asked to reserve your place at the following celebrations of the Holy Eucharist: Saturday 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am,

Sunday 10:00 am and Sunday 5:00 pm. Please do this by calling or emailing the Church Office (855-5209) no later than Saturday at 12 Noon.

The 'Drive-in' Service at 3:30 pm on Sundays in the old Moncton High School Parking lot will be continued, rain or shine, for the foreseeable future. You do NOT need to make a reservation to attend it – nor do you need to reserve your favourite living room chair to participate in one of the live-streamed Services!

Our 'new normal' was certainly not something that any of us imagined. There's no denying that the corona virus has turned the world upside down, but many people have responded to the challenges with faith and courage. By God's grace, let's continue to look on the bright side and find ways to worship the Lord. We have so much for which to be thankful!

This coming Sunday, May 17th, is the last in the Easter Season. Next Thursday (May 21st) is Ascension Day, and Sunday, May 31st, is the Day of Pentecost. These are major holy days in the Church Year and they carry messages of Hope and reassurance. Please find a way to participate in the Church's offering of praise.

One of my favourite Dr. Seuss stories is 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'. Even after all of their decorations and presents were taken away, the Whos in Whoville gathered on Christmas morning to sing. Then the old Grinch "heard a sound rising over the snow. It started in low, then it started to grow. Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small, was singing without any presents at all!" Like the Whos, we have a song to sing – a song that not even COVID-19 can squelch.

Thank you for your faithfulness in making your offerings to the Lord for the work of His Church. I am so grateful for what you are doing. To God be the glory. Please do not hesitate to let me know how I may be of service. It will be good to begin to gather again in Jesus' Name, as we are able.

Yours in Him,

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Priest and Rector
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St. George's Operation Plan for COVID-19

A. Sundays:

1. People will be asked to reserve their place at Sunday Services by contacting the Church Office (855-5209) no later than Saturday at 12 Noon, in order to maintain compliance with the number of people permitted by provincial authorities. Currently that total number of people permitted in the Nave is ten.
2. The Main door on Church Street and the Elevator door on Queen Street will be the designated entrances.
3. The Chapel door on Queen Street and the Elevator door on Queen Street will be the designated exits.
4. A warm welcome will be offered at both entrances with the necessary screening process and sharing of information regarding screening, hand sanitizing, respiratory etiquette, social distancing, traffic flow, use of mask, and the administration of the Holy Communion.
5. People will be asked to sanitize their hands before entering. Hand sanitizer (of 60% alcohol) and Kleenex will be available in the main entrance, elevator entrance, at the back of the Church, in the Sanctuary, at the Altar, and at other designated locations in the Church.
6. A log of attendees will be maintained for each Service.
7. Counters will adjust their positions/location to maintain social distancing.
8. The offering plate will NOT be passed. It will be placed at the back of the church.
9. Personal Protective Equipment for first responders from the Congregation will be available at the back of the church, at the Warden's bench.
10. Church bulletins will be collected after each Service and NOT re-issued until after 72 hours.
11. Hand-washing instructions and cleaning schedules will be posted in the washrooms.

B. Attendance at the Daily Office or the Holy Eucharist on weekdays

12. For security purposes, the Chapel Door will be the designated entrance and exit; however, the Elevator will be available, if required.
13. The Main Church will be used.
14. Those attending on weekdays may sit in the Choir or in the Nave. All protocols outlined for Sundays regarding screening, social distancing, hand sanitizing, and masks will be followed.

C. Social Distancing

15. People will be asked to sit as couples, families/bubbles, or individuals in every third pew. These pews will be switched, as required, for later Services.
16. Extra Services at 5:00 pm on Saturdays and 3:30 pm on Sundays will be added to facilitate social distancing.
17. We will continue to live-stream Services to facilitate social distancing, and as a ministry to those who are not ready or able to attend public worship.

E. Masks

18. Masks are welcome and will be worn by the Greeters. The Rector will also wear one when administering the Holy Communion.
19. Charity, kindness and patience will be required by everyone.

F. Housekeeping/Cleaning Regimen

20. The Altar Guild will cleanse the sacred vessels as detailed in the cleaning instructions posted in the Sacristy.

21. Frequently-touched-surfaces, doorknobs and washrooms will be cleaned in between Services.
22. Pews will be alternated after each Service and Bulletins/Prayer books will NOT be re-issued for 72 hours.
23. People will be asked to put the kneelers down in their pews when they leave, to facilitate the cleaning process.

G. The Administration of the Holy Communion

19. The Priest will wear a mask when administering the Holy Communion.
20. The Server, Deacon and Priest will wash their hands before the Service begins; and, they will sanitize their hands again at the Offertory. The Priest will sanitize his hands a third time before administering the Holy Communion.
21. The Communion will be administered to the people in their pews, in one kind.

H. The Sunday School

22. Details will be announced at a later date following an announcement regarding the reopening of Day Cares.

I. Drive-in Services

23. Drive-in Services will continue according to the provincial and Bishop's directives (The Priest will administer the Holy Communion in one kind, wearing a mask, with proper hand sanitization).

J. Community Meals

24. Community Meals will continue as take-outs until September.
25. The Elevator Door will be the designated pick-up location.
26. Volunteers managing the distribution will wear masks and gloves, and a table will be used to provide proper distancing at the entrance.

K. The Church Office

27. As much as possible, business will be conducted by email and telephone.
28. Offerings will be gratefully received in any kind; however, instructions on PAR and E transfers will continue to be made available.
29. In order to maintain proper social distancing, the bottom half of the Office door will remain closed.
30. Office staff will maintain two metres of social distancing and office surfaces and furniture will be sanitized frequently, as required.
31. Telephones and desks will NOT be shared.

L. Bible Studies, Vestry Meetings and Small Groups

32. These will continue by ZOOM until further notice.

M. Responding to the Doorbell

33. St. George's staff members will attempt to deal with assistance requests from our Community friends at the door. However, requests to use the shower, bathroom or telephone will be facilitated by maintaining social distancing and proper hand sanitization. Screening and key messaging will be undertaken, and disinfecting will be conducted immediately following each visit, as required.
34. Two washrooms will be designated for public use, the other for staff use.

N. Third party use of the Church Hall

There will be no third-party use of St. George's Church Hall until further notice.

Postscript

This Operation Plan is meant to help us worship together safely as a parish family. We cannot, of course, reduce the risks to zero. Please consider your part in protecting yourself and protecting others particularly those more vulnerable to the consequences of becoming sick with COVID-19.

Thank you, and "Thanks be to God, Who, in Christ, always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere". (2 Corinthians 2.14)

