**COVID 19 Operational Safety Plan**

**Summary**

This report is based upon what we know as of Wednesday June 10, 2020 and was prepared by the AbbeyChurch Staff Team; including the Rev. Meagan Crosby-Shearer, the Rev. Rob Crosby-Shearer and the Rev. Matthew Humphrey.

As AbbeyChurch discerns when gatherings can resume as we recover from the pandemic, our number one priority must be the safety of our followers and always acting in accordance with Provincial Health Guidelines as well as the guidelines established by the Anglican Diocese of BC – with reference to the guidelines of the Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada. We will also adhere to the guidelines of the host congregation, St. Matthias Anglican Church and work closely with our hosts to ensure that we are pulling more than our weight in the cleaning of the facility, as well as contributing to the supplies required.

We make the following recommendations for the time beginning July 12, 2020, which is the first date the Diocese is allowing a gathering for worship. As a shared ministry we will submit this to our territorial Archdeacon The Rev. Alastair McCollum (ACC) and our Regional Minister Gail Miller (UCC)

* Consideration will be made to host gatherings inside the property at 600 Richmond Ave. (AbbeyChurch/St. Matthias) and 1702 Belmont Ave (The Priory) Victoria., only after July 11, 2020 and will cease when requested by the Provincial Health Authorities or by the Anglican Diocese of BC.
* Gatherings inside the 600 Richmond Property will be restricted to fewer than 40 at one time, allowing for physical distancing protocols. It is most likely that our gatherings will be much smaller than 40. For the Priory we will limit gatherings to 4 people
* All gatherings will include a name and telephone number list of attendees for the sole use of contract tracing purposes for the Provincial Health Authority which will be destroyed 30 days after collecting.
* Children’s ministry may occur at specific times, in accordance with Provincial Health Authority guidelines including keeping children at 2m intervals. Children’s ministry will be held outside, with access to the building for washroom use only or to find parents. Notably, most children at AbbeyChurch are already in the same ‘bubble’.
* Minor tweaks in the plan can be made by AbbeyChurch staff team based on experiences, providing they are in accordance with Diocesan and Provincial Guidelines and both the Regional Archdeacon and Regional Minister is informed.

In considering this plan, it is very possible that this could be our new normal or an approximate of our new normal until such time as a vaccine is found. That may not be until late in 2021.

**Background**

After March 15, 2020, AbbeyChurch decided to cancel all public gatherings and close the building to the public until further notice as a result of the COVID 19 virus and in accordance with diocesan and provincial government guidelines. The Emmaus Community ceased morning prayer at the Priory at that same time. Sunday worship has been continuing with livestream on Sundays, and Morning Prayer by Zoom 6-7 days a week.

**Operational Plan - General**

The purpose of an operational plan for this Community of Faith is to address public health measures during the COVID-19 recovery in BC.

* **Physical distancing (minimum distance of two metres)**   
  Maintain a minimum distance of two metres between yourself and others at all times, with the exception of members of the same household or “bubble”.
* **Frequent and thorough handwashing**  
  Practice proper hand hygiene including [good handwashing practices](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/WASH_LAVEZ.pdf). Proper handwashing requires regularly and thoroughly washing your hands with soap and water or minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer as approved by Health Canada.
* **Cleaning surfaces properly**  
  Regular [cleaning and disinfect](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/Cleaning_DisinfectingE.pdf)ing frequently touched objects and surfaces. Regular household cleaners, disinfectant wipes or a diluted bleach solution can be used according to the label directions.
* **Respiratory hygiene**  
  Practice good respiratory hygiene. When you cough or sneeze, do so into a tissue; dispose of the tissue and wash your hands afterwards. If you do not have a tissue available, cough into your sleeve or elbow.
* **Community face masks**  
  Wearing a [non-medical mask](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/MASK.pdf), also referred to as a community face mask, is required when unable to maintain physical distancing in the community.

**Operational Plan – The AbbeyChurch and Emmaus Priory**

The following details of an operational plan for in building gatherings from a traffic flow perspective is modeled on what most of us have experienced the last few months at grocery stores and pharmacies. Details as follows:

* The church will be cleaned / sanitized after a Sunday morning St. Matthias worship or other uses preceding AbbeyChurch. AbbeyChurch will also sanitize before the next expected use of the worship space.
* At the Church, all will enter through the south entrance and exit through the north, with the exception of mobility impaired people. At the Priory, folks will enter through the main entrance and exit through the laundry area.
* At the Church, there will be clearly marked areas 2m outside the entrance for attendees to wait or they may choose to wait in their car until the gathering time.
* Congregational singing will not happen and the band/ensemble will be at least 2 metres from the congregation.
* At AbbeyChurch, the service will be projected on the screen. At the Priory, leaflets will be immediately destroyed after use. Prayer books and hymnals will not be used.
* Attendees will be requested to self-screen before coming to gatherings and will be provided with the screening criteria (Appendix 1) by email as part of our re-opening notification process
* The Holy Eucharist / Communion will only be offered in accordance with the protocols established by the Anglican Diocese of BC; including using small hosts only, consecrating in both kinds but distributing only one. Clergy will be distributing communion adhering to the guidelines for distribution including hand sanitization and non-medical masks.
* All signage on the door will indicate to the attendee that they must refrain from entering the premises if they have any COVID 19 symptoms, and indicate the symptoms. Signage will be at the Priory as well.
* We will continue to livestream worship so that vulnerable and dispersed members can continue to worship alongside the gathered community. We will continue Zoom prayer most times we gather.
* Once inside, the following protocols will be in place for the Church:
  + Signs reminding attendees to remain 2 metres apart.
  + Arrows will be set to direct people in a one-way flow through the worship space.
  + Donation basket will be removed – donation request sign to be posted for online giving only.
  + Attendees will be limited to 40, and, in reality, likely be less. While capacity of the building is significantly higher, we are restricting totals to ensure best physical distancing practices can be maintained. When in the space, people living in the same residence (or in the same “bubble”) do not need to sit 2 metres apart.
  + Hymnals, games, toys, bibles and other shared/community items will be removed.
  + The washroom will be operational but only one person at a time in a washroom to maintain social distancing. Washrooms will be sterilized after each use. Attendees will be encouraged to use the washrooms only when necessary.
  + When the gathering is over the attendees will be asked to exit pew by pew or section by section (depending on room set-up) starting at the back.
  + There will be no serving of shared food and beverage service.

**Operational Plan – Building**

Likewise, the operational plan for the building will be similar to what each of us has experienced the last few months at retail locations. Details as follows:

* Outside doors will be locked at all times.
* Staff, clergy and lay leadership will self-screen each day and continue to work from home wherever possible, and sparingly in the church.
* The AbbeyChurch will work with St. Matthias to ensure all surfaces and washrooms are serviced before and after worship.
* Hand sanitizing stations will be placed inside both exterior entrance / exit.
* COVID 19 and Handwashing signs will be placed on both entrance doors, in each washroom, and all bulletin boards.

**Appendix 1**

Public Health says symptoms shown by people with COVID-19 have included:

* a fever above 38 C
* a new cough or worsening chronic cough
* sore throat
* runny nose
* Headache
* new onset of fatigue
* new onset of muscle pain
* Diarrhea
* loss of sense of taste or smell
* difficulty breathing
* In children, symptoms have also included purple markings on the fingers and toes.

People with two or more of these symptoms are asked to stay at home and call 811 or their doctor.