

**First Metropolitan United
Church Reopening to a New
Normal Plan Phase 2**

(=Safety Plan)

**Written By: First Metropolitan
United Church Board**

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As per the recommendation of the Pacific Mountain Region, no dates are provided on this plan. Moving from one phase to the next will depend on the guidance from the Province of British Columbia Public Health office and on how the current phase of this plan is working for our church. The over-arching principal is to go slow, not take any undue risks and make sure any risks are outweighed by the benefit. All decisions around opening up the church to more activities must be recorded in detail in Board minutes.

Values for Reopening up the Church to a New Normal

- To love one another unconditionally as God loves us and to value each person's uniqueness.
- To value the gifts of community and being an integral part of the wider community

Goals for Reopening up the Church to a New Normal

- Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Make staff feel safe
- Make participants feel safe
- Preserve job opportunities

Reopening to a New Normal United Church of Canada Phase 2

Worship and other activities can resume in church buildings, with social distancing and masks. Details on mask use are found in the "Other Safety Considerations" section below. Staff may return to work in the office with some restrictions noted in the "Staffing Activities" section below. Tenants continue to operate and have priority over rental groups for rooms. Rental groups can return with some restrictions noted in the "Rental Group Activities" section below. Booked rooms are unlocked only once the group organizer arrives. Cloth based chairs are replaced with plastic or Naugahyde chairs. Regardless of the activity, all outside doors of the church remain locked. Rooms are booked with at least two hours between bookings to allow for cleaning and sanitizing.

Staffing Activities

1. The 8 staff members who regularly work at the church have returned to work though they are still working from home as much as possible. Every staff member has a private office with at least one window that opens for ventilation. While there are no restrictions on staff movement or staff work hours, all staff interactions are expected to be at a 2-meter distance for less than 15 minutes.
2. Any staff interaction over 15 minutes is considered a meeting which needs to be held in a well-ventilated room with a maximum occupancy exceeding or equal to the number of meeting attendees. Meetings will be held virtually whenever possible.
3. As per the sick leave policy, the health check form filled out at home before coming to work and the door signage, staff members will not enter the building if they have any symptom of COVID 19, if they have been out of the country in the last 14 days, have a close contact diagnosed with COVID 19 or have been told by Public Health to self-isolate.

4. Staff members who let others into the building are required to ask those individuals if they have any symptom of COVID 19, if they have been out of the country in the last 14 days or have a close contact diagnosed with COVID 19. If the individual answers yes to at least one of these questions, the individual cannot enter the building. Should the individual become abusive, the police are to be called.

Worship Activities

- 1) Recording of Sunday services will continue to take place approximately every two weeks in a socially distant manner in the Sanctuary. Select congregants will be invited on “recording Sundays” to be the congregation. The total number of staff, volunteers and congregants in the Sanctuary is not to exceed the mass gathering limit in any BC Public Health order. Everyone must follow all posted signage outside and inside the building including social distancing rules. All individuals have assigned seating positions and microphones if needed which are all at least 2 meters away from each other. The technical people wear masks and gloves as social distancing is not always possible.
- 2) Only one person speaks or sings at any given time and are 2 meters away from everyone else while speaking or singing. The singer is accompanied by at most one instrumentalist usually on the piano and is 2 meters away from their accompanist. Should a wind instrument be playing solo or accompanied, the wind instrument is pointed away from others and the wind instrumentalist is 2 meters away from everyone else. All other restrictions related to singers and musical instruments are detailed in the other safety considerations section.
- 3) A collection basket receives the offerings and other documents from in person congregants. After the service recordings are complete, the Building Supervisor pours the contents of the collection into an unsealed envelope. The contents of that envelope are not looked at until at least Monday afternoon though they are usually looked at on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.
- 4) Memorial services and weddings will follow all of the relevant procedures from the Worship Activities, Rental Group Activities and Other Safety Considerations sections.
- 5) A procedure for baptisms within local restrictions about numbers has been developed. These procedures include:
 - a. For Infant baptism, the parents/guardians of the child are the only ones to hold them. The officiant will sanitize their hands and put on a mask before the baptism. The officiant and all members of the baptismal party other than children under the age of 2 will be masked as well.
 - b. Only one baptism or multiple baptisms in one family take place in any given service so that the water can come from the common font which is sanitized between baptisms.
 - c. A baptismal certificate and any small baptismal gift will be mailed to the family subsequent to the baptism.

Other Church Activities

- 1) Each church group booking space inside the building in Phase 2 must provide the Board with a written safety plan in advance of their event or the start of a recurring activity. No event can plan to exceed the occupancy of the room booked or the maximum gathering size mandated by the BC Public Health Office. That plan needs to be put in the safety plan binder located in the Front Office.
- 2) No food or drink can be served or provided. Individuals can bring their own drink in a lidded container and may bring their own food and serving utensils.
- 3) Activities can take place any time during normal building hours (Sunday 8 am to 2 pm, Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and 5:45 pm to 9:45 pm Monday to Thursday). Other times might be considered if sufficient custodial staff is available.

Rental Group Activities

- 1) Each rental group booking space in Phase 2 must provide the Board with a written safety plan at least two weeks in advance of their event or the start of a recurring activity. No event can plan to exceed the occupancy of the room booked or the maximum gathering size mandated by the BC Public Health Office. That plan needs to be put in the safety plan binder located in the Front Office.
- 2) No food or drink can be served or provided. Individuals can bring their own drink in a lidded container and may bring their own food and serving utensils.
- 3) The Fellowship Hall may not be used for banquets given the Public Health order closing all banquet halls.
- 4) Activities can take any time during normal building hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and 5:45 pm to 9:45 pm Monday to Thursday). Other times might be considered if sufficient custodial staff is available.
- 5) Room 102 (Library), is re-opened with an updated occupancy sign and a sign asking that books not be touched when the room is used as a meeting room. At most weekly, the room is being used as a Library. All library volunteers and browsers will wash and sanitize their hands before handling library materials. The total number of volunteers and browsers is not to exceed the room occupancy. Users who borrow items will be expected to fill out their own borrower card and date due slip. Books are returned in the book return slot and are quarantined for at least 72 hours (usually a week) before being shelved for use.
- 6) Room 225 (Healing Touch Room), room 113B (Toddler Play Room), room 114 (Nursery), the Sanctuary balcony & Sanctuary basement men's washroom, and the kitchen areas in rooms 101, 119 and 200 are closed until Phase 3 of this plan. They will be cleaned monthly.

Other Safety Considerations

- 1) Continue encouraging people over 60, those with underlying medical conditions that have weakened immune systems, and those who have family members at home who are vulnerable to participate only in online activities.
- 2) As of November 1, 2020, masks must be worn inside the church building except by the following individuals:
 - a. Children under the age of 6
 - b. Anyone with a medical condition which prevents wearing a mask (face shields are an acceptable alternative)
 - c. Staff members in their own office
 - d. Anyone speaking, singing or playing an instrument during an event; during the event, unmasked individuals must be at least 2 meters away from other participants masked or unmasked; masks must be worn up to the start of the event and put back on at the end of the event
 - e. Anyone exercising during a class or event; during the exercise period, unmasked individuals must be at least 2 meters away from other participants masked or unmasked; masks must be worn up to the start of the exercise period and put back on at the end of the exercise period
 - f. Anyone eating or drinking; eating and drinking alone is encouraged but, if not possible, unmasked individuals must be at least 2 meters away from others
 - g. Anyone teaching a class where the ability to see lips is critical can substitute a face shield for a mask
- 3) Wireless microphone headsets are labeled with the user's name. Tenants and rental groups using First Met's equipment will be expected to bring their own headsets. The clip-on receivers are picked up, used and put away by the user. Wireless microphones are placed in microphone stands by the technical staff, turned on and then not touched by any user. The technical staff is responsible for putting the wireless microphones away. Handheld wireless microphones not placed in stands are only handled by one user.
- 4) Anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID or who has symptoms of COVID-19 should not participate in choir activities or musical instrument playing in-person. Public health recommends that people who are more likely to experience complications of COVID-19 – including older adults – avoid singing with others in-person, especially in larger groups.
- 5) Adults and children who are not ill should sing or play musical instruments in groups that are no larger than 50 and follow appropriate COVID-19 precautions (e.g., physical distancing, recording the contact information of participants, and regular hand washing) and Orders of the Provincial Health Officer.
- 6) Singing or playing musical instruments outdoors is best, or in a large indoor space with good ventilation. Reduce the duration of indoor singing or instrument playing. Have practice intervals followed by breaks to allow rooms to ventilate. The longer the duration of a practice where people are in close proximity, the greater the chance of transmission.
- 7) If sharing instruments is unavoidable (such as for a piano), items should be cleaned and disinfected between users. Consider the placement of instruments based on their risk of release of droplets (for example, flutes could be placed where exhalation would not be directed at other

musicians). Brass instrument condensate should under no circumstances be released on the floor (as is often the case with spit valves) – this condensate should be captured in a container or on an absorbent cloth. Remember to practice hand hygiene each time after handling condensate and touching spit valves.

- 8) First Met's organ is reserved for the exclusive use of the Director of Music Ministry due to the length of time it would take and the complexity of sanitizing the organ without damaging it.
- 9) The social aspects of choir or band rehearsals are adapted for COVID-19 precautions including no sharing of food, no physical greetings (like hugs or handshakes), and keeping adequate physical distance during breaks.
- 10) If anyone who spent time in the church building tests positive for COVID 19, First Met would follow all recommendations provided to them by BC Public Health.