



## St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church

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July 31, 2020

*"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." Romans 12.9-13*

To the beloved saints of St. John the Evangelist,

Grace you, and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus.

We have travelled many miles while staying put these past four and a half months. We have patiently hunkered down, self-isolated and found new ways of being the church during the closure of our buildings. Now the time has arrived to slowly resume in-person worship.

On July 7, Bishop Parker authorized the diocesan plan for reopening titled *In This Together*. A summary of the stages of the plan (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green) is attached. To see the full plan and all current information about the diocese's response to COVID-19, please visit St. John's website or [www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19](http://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19). If you cannot access the electronic version, please call the church office and leave a message, asking for a hard copy to be mailed or delivered to you.

On July 14, in consultation with diocesan COVID-19 Advisors and based on the current trends in the evolution of the virus in the area, Bishop Parker announced the diocese would move from Red stage to **Amber** on **September 1** and parishes could aim to have in-person worship with restrictions starting **September 6**. It is understood that we will not proceed to Amber stage if pandemic conditions worsen in the interim.

Meetings of Wardens and Parish Council the week of July 20 have resulted in the establishment of St. John's Pandemic Task Force (PTF), which has been charged with the implementation of the diocesan plan at St. John's. Members of the PTF are: Linda Coleman; Lois Dewey; Terry Dillabough; Emily Duberville; Pat Lee; Doreen Watt; Karen Bryan; Paul Howard; Garry Rodford; Dan Willis; Canon Catherine Ascah.

The PTF will be working in the coming weeks to prepare St. John's for safe reopening. Per the *In This Together Plan*, we will proceed with cautious first steps. The safety of everyone is the highest priority. As such, in-person worship will look and feel very different than when we were last together in March. Weekly updates will be posted on St. John's website starting August 6, and these updates will be communicated by phone to parishioners on a renewed phone tree. Starting September 3, electronic bulletins will be e-mailed to parishioners who have registered. If you have not already done so and you wish to subscribe to these bulletins, please e-mail the parish office.

The risk of virus transmission increases in closed spaces, crowded spaces and close contact. Amber stage and the directives indicated are designed to help lower the chance of spread while allowing people to worship together in company.

The following outlines what you may expect by way of worship at St. John's in the **Amber** stage.

1. Only two weekly liturgies will be offered: **Sundays at 8am & 10:30am**. Both will be Eucharistic, and both will be from page 185 in the Book of Alternatives Services.
2. A maximum of 50 people at a time will be allowed in the building.
3. Please notify the parish office in advance which service you plan to attend, how many in your household will be with you and commit yourself to that time. If you know you will not be attending on a Sunday, contact the parish office as soon as possible.
4. Masks must be worn by everyone attending the service.
5. You will be screened before entering the church and your contact information will be confirmed. This information is strictly for tracing in the event someone contracts COVID-19 and we need to reach you. It will be kept securely and destroyed when it is no longer necessary to keep it.
6. There will be one door by which you enter and one door by which you exit. The parking lot entrance will only be used for those requiring the ramp.
7. There will not be congregational singing.
8. Sunday School will meet on-line only in Amber.
9. No physical contact between people during the peace, greetings etc.
10. Communion will be in one-kind only (bread) and administered by the priest.
11. The parish hall will not be accessible on Sundays.
12. The washroom at the back of the church will only be available for emergency use.
13. Seating and movement will be arranged to ensure physical distancing.
14. There will be no coffee-hour/social time after the service and people will be asked not to linger in the building.
15. The church will be disinfected between the services.

If you do not feel comfortable returning to in-person worship at this time, that's okay. We will continue to broadcast on Cogeco Sundays at 8am & 1pm (one week's delay) and we hope to post same day recordings on our website for those who choose to worship from home. Of course, if you are not feeling well for any reason, you *must* stay home to protect yourself and others.

This letter does not cover every detail. Please refer to the larger diocesan plan and St. John's website for more information and updates. If you have any questions, contact a member of the PTF. We ask for your support and patience as we undertake this significant work.

Everyone is tired of self-isolating. Everyone is tired of the restrictions that are in place. But the virus continues to be present and we must remain vigilant to help control its spread. This is truly a marathon, not a short term-sprint. Be kind to one another and be kind to yourself as we navigate this transition. Be generous of spirit. Above all, remember the words of St. Paul: *Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.* We will get through this together. The time will come when we will be able to hug one another and sing and eat together.

Thank you to everyone who has continued to financially support the mission and ministry of St. John's at this time. Your contributions have allowed us to be the church in new and different ways.

We remain yours in Christ,



The Reverend Canon Catherine Ascah  
Rector



Paul Howard  
Rector's Warden

Karen Bryan  
People's Warden

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