



# The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

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Regional Council 15  
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## **Covid-19 Update April 28, 2021 (Nova Scotia)**

Dear Regional Council 15 Members (Ministry Personnel and Lay Members),

Please see below the information received on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 from Dr. Strang. I have bolded information important to our Faith Gatherings. The restrictions are effective on Wednesday, April 28, 2021 and will remain in effect until at least May 12, 2021. **They apply to all areas of Nova Scotia.**

*I regret to say that due to rapid progression in the COVID situation in Nova Scotia, at 8 am, April 28, 2021, the COVID restrictions were significantly increased across the entire province. Unfortunately, **a key prevention step needs to be closing all gatherings, including faith gatherings.** I appreciate how challenging this will be for you and your congregations but we are in a very serious situation. I ask for continued prayer for the safety of all Nova Scotians at this time.*

**Here are the details of the restrictions:**

### **Gatherings, Schools and Daycare**

- Nova Scotians can only gather indoors or outdoors with their household bubble, which is the people they live with
- households of two or less people can socialize with one or two others but they must be the same people for this two-week period
- no unnecessary travel between communities; a community is defined as the municipality where you live - people should stay as close to home as possible when accessing essential or necessary services or products
- all public and private schools are closed
- day cares will remain open, with the focus on providing service to those providing essential services or have no other child-care option; essential workers who need help to access childcare supports can contact [ECDSERVICES@Novascotia.ca](mailto:ECDSERVICES@Novascotia.ca) or call 1-877-223-9555

### **Masking**

- mandatory masking for staff, visitors and children over two years old in indoor child-care settings
- mandatory masking outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including playgrounds and parks
- in private indoor workplaces such as offices or warehouses, masks are mandatory in all common areas, places where there is interaction with the public, areas with poor ventilation, and areas where distance cannot be maintained

## **Retail and Business**

- retail stores are closed for in-person service unless those stores provide services essential to the life, health or personal safety of individuals and animals. These stores can remain open at 25 per cent capacity and include those that provide:
  - food
  - pharmaceutical products, medicine and medical devices
  - personal hygiene products
  - cleaning products
  - baby and child products
  - gas stations and garages
  - computer and cellphone service and repair
  - electronic and office supplies
  - hardware supplies
  - pet and animal supplies
- restaurants and licensed establishments are closed for dine-in service, but contactless take-out or delivery is allowed
- Nova Scotia Liquor Commission stores can remain open at 25 per cent capacity
- personal services such as hair salons, barber shops and spas are closed
- regulated and unregulated health professions can remain open with an approved COVID-19 plan
- Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax and Sydney and First Nations gaming establishments and VLTs must close

## **Events, Recreation, Arts and Culture**

- **wedding and funeral ceremonies can have five people, plus officiants**
- **no social events, special events, festivals, arts/cultural events, sports events, faith gatherings, wedding receptions, or funeral visitation or receptions**
- no meetings or training except mental health and addictions support groups, which can have 10 people with physical distancing and masks
- **virtual gatherings and performances can be held with a maximum of five people in one location**
- all fitness, recreational and sports facilities are closed
- licensed and unlicensed establishments cannot host activities such as darts, cards, pool and bowling
- indoor fitness facilities like gyms and yoga studios and sport and recreation facilities like pools, arenas, tennis courts and large multipurpose recreation facilities are closed
- businesses and organizations offering a wide variety of indoor recreation activities are closed, such as indoor play areas, arcades, climbing facilities, dance classes and music lessons
- outdoor recreation activities, including individual sports, are allowed and encouraged; outdoor fitness and recreation businesses and organized clubs can operate with a maximum of five people and physical distancing
- museums, libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia are closed, but libraries can offer pick-up and drop-off of books and other materials

## **Long-term Care/Special Care**

- **there will be no visitors or volunteers allowed inside long-term care facilities except for designated care providers and no visits to the community**
- all adult day programs for seniors closed
- all homes licensed by the Department of Community Service under the Homes for Special Care Act cannot have visitors and residents cannot have community access
- all adult day programs for persons with disabilities funded by the Department of Community Services will be closed except for scheduled vaccine clinics at three of these programs

People who do not follow the public health measures can be fined. For example, the fine is now \$2,000 for each person at an illegal gathering.

I wish to thank Dr. Strang and his team for meeting regularly with Faith Leaders and for providing very timely emails for our information.

**What does this now mean for our Nova Scotia Churches:**

While virtual gatherings of up to 5 are permitted in one location, if you are able to video your services from your home, then I would encourage you to continue with your virtual services in this manner. If you are not able to record from home, we recommend that you take a two week “circuit break” to protect each other and your communities. I would not recommend taking hard copies of services to people’s homes at this time. People will need to stay home as much as possible. For weddings and funerals, it would be wise to postpone for the next two weeks. If you are not able to postpone, you are permitted to have 5 (five) people plus the officiant, meaning a maximum of 6 (six) people present, with all of the COVID restrictions in place.

I would like to encourage you to make phone calls to one another and to your members, check in with one another, and especially the vulnerable and those who live alone.

The one way to flatten the curve of this virus is to follow the regulations and, if at all possible, to go above and beyond. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to be in contact. I know these are difficult times and there is a sense of exhaustion and extreme fatigue as we go through the ups and downs of this virus. Let us hold each other in prayer. Together, with everyone doing their part, we will get through this!

*Faith*

Faith March-MacCuish  
Executive Minister