



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
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Covid-19 Update August 16, 2021 (Nova Scotia)

Dear members of Regional Council 15 (Nova Scotia):

As things begin to open up, we also want our churches to be able to open up more fully and be able to have some form of normalcy, while at the same time paying close attention to the world around us and doing our due diligence to keep ourselves and those who are vulnerable safe. Nova Scotia is currently at **Phase 4** of the reopening.

On July 21, 2021, Dr. Strang updated the Guidelines for Faith Gatherings for Nova Scotia. Please note that the mask requirements have **not** changed. Masks at this point are still a requirement for indoor public spaces. I have been asked some question about whether it is permissible to remove your masks while in church? As of right now that is not permitted.

Please see the link to the updated guidelines:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Faith-based-gatherings-guidelines.pdf>

Singing:

If you decide to have congregational singing, please remember:

Faith-based activities, rituals and practices should be reviewed to determine if they increase the risk of spreading COVID-19, with a focus on those that increase the risk of COVID-19 through contact (touching surfaces) or droplet transmission (sneezing, coughing, singing). Consider discontinuing or altering practices or activities that increase risk. Masks must be worn by the congregation. Those leading the singing and those presiding at worship may remove their masks when singing and leading. They must still be distanced from the congregation, and one another, (if not in the same bubble) and must return to using masks when not speaking/singing.

Please see the following link to help you with your decision about singing.

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-Guidance-for-Vocalists-and-Instrumentalists.pdf>

For Faith-Based Gatherings, continue to:

- Maintain physical distancing between all individuals including congregants, ushers, greeters, officiant, etc. (people from the same household or pre-determined close social group do not have to keep physical distance).

- Adjust seating arrangements to allow physical distancing.
- Traditional greetings, such as handshakes and hugs, should be avoided.
- Ceremonial traditions that involve sharing of items or close contact should be altered to maintain a 2 metre/6 foot separation.
- Instructional settings for children (e.g. Sunday school) should follow the applicable guidelines for day camps. **Please see the guidelines sent out by Catherine Stuart.**
- Baptism - Separate Bowls of water for each Baptism. Have the parents hold the child, use a shell for pouring water, sanitize your hands before baptism, etc.
- Communion – Individual packaged communion elements.
- Provide hand sanitizer at the entry and throughout the facility.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after handling items that might be shared.

Food:

Providing food and beverages after faith-based activities or events can occur if physical distancing and good hand hygiene practices are followed. No self-serve areas. Designated individuals to serve food and beverages is recommended, while maintaining physical distancing and wearing non-medical masks. Food and beverages should not be shared.

Small Group Instruction/Meetings:

Small group, instructional settings, meetings for adults (e.g., bible study) must follow physical distancing, must remain masked. If there is food, you must follow the guidelines above.

Gathering Limits:

- Faith gatherings that are run by a business or organization - 50% of the venue's capacity: up to 150 people indoors and up to 250 people outdoors with social distancing and masks
- Wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) hosted by a business or organization - 50% of the venue's capacity up to 150 people indoors, and
- Wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) that are not hosted by a business or organization need to follow the informal social gathering limit for household members (the people you live with) and close social contacts, plus the person conducting the ceremony.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to be in touch at fmaccuish@united-church.ca or at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 6156.

Sincerely,

Faith

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister