



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
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December 17, 2020

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

Please see below the information received today from Dr. Strang. I have highlighted and bolded information important to our Faith Gatherings.

At the December 16, 2020 briefing with Premier McNeil, the following was announced:

- the current restrictions in areas of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and Hants County are extended until 11:59 p.m. on December 20, 2020
- the closure of restaurants and licensed establishments for dine-in service in these areas is extended until 11:59 p.m. on January 10, 2021; they can continue to offer takeout and delivery service
- the Halifax casino will also remain closed until 11:59 p.m. on January 10, 2021
- new provincewide restrictions for gatherings, businesses and activities, as well as changes to long-term care restrictions will start December 21, 2020 and be in place until January 10, 2021

Effective 12:01 a.m. on December 21, 2020 to 11:59 p.m. on January 10, 2021, the following restrictions are in place provincewide:

For gatherings and events:

- gatherings in your home can have 10 people total, including the people who live there
- people can have a close social group of 10 without physical distancing
- social events, festivals, special events, arts/cultural events and sports events are not permitted
- **faith gatherings, wedding ceremonies and funeral services can have a maximum of 150 people outdoors or 50 per cent of an indoor venue's capacity, to a maximum of 100**
- **wedding and funeral receptions are not permitted**

For businesses:

- restaurants and licensed establishments, outside the areas of HRM and Hants County noted above, must stop service by 10:00 p.m. and close by 11:00 p.m.
- fitness and sport and recreation facilities can open
- fitness facilities like gyms and yoga studios can operate at 50 per cent capacity and must ensure three metres distance between participants during high intensity activities

- outdoor fitness classes can operate at full capacity and must ensure three metres distance between participants during high intensity activities
- personal services such as hair salons and spas can resume providing services that can only be done if the customer removes their mask, such as facials
- retail and shopping mall rules currently in place for areas of HRM and Hants County will extend to the entire province, including operating at 25 per cent of their capacity; their food courts can remain open with public health measures in place including physical distance between tables

For sports, museums, libraries and long-term care:

- sports practices, training and arts and culture rehearsals are limited to 25 participants without physical distancing but games, tournaments and performances are not permitted
- the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, museums and libraries can reopen at full capacity with physical distancing and other public health measures in place
- each long-term care resident can have two designated caregivers and facilities can allow a limited number of visitors

Nova Scotians are still asked to avoid any unnecessary travel. There is no longer a recommendation specifically around travel into and out of areas of HRM and Hants County.

The restriction most relevant to faith communities is the ability to hold faith gatherings with a maximum of 150 people outdoors or 50 per cent of an indoor venue's capacity, to a maximum of 100. In recognition of the importance of faith gatherings these are the only type of gatherings that will be allowed over the next 3 weeks.

I recognize that for some of you this is good news, as it allows you to have some limited in-person services once again, but for others it reduces the maximum capacity from 200 to 100. I do know that this may bring frustration or disappointment, but I ask for your understanding and patience as we make these difficult decisions. I also want to recognize that almost all other gatherings are not being allowed and that an important distinction to allow faith gatherings, even in a limited way, has been made.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in contact.

Blessings to all for a safe and happy Christmas,

Faith

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister