



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
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Covid-19 Update June 8, 2021 (Nova Scotia)

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

Please see below the information received on June 7, 2021 from Dr. Strang. ***This information applies to all areas of Nova Scotia.***

Dear Faith Leaders (and others who have written me recently about faith gatherings),

On June 2nd, the Nova Scotia re-opening plan started with phase 1 Public Health restrictions coming into effect. Details on the reopening plan re available at <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-plan/> but in short this is a 5 phase plan, with progress along the phases being based on COVID 19 epidemiology and one and two dose vaccination rates. I anticipate that we will be able to progress to phase 4 by mid-July and phase 5 by mid-September.

It has been challenging to meet multiple objectives while striving for consistency between various re-opening segments, and we have also deliberately taken a cautious approach as that has been a key part of our ongoing success in controlling COVID 19. This means we look different than some other provinces and will not meet everyone's expectations in Nova Scotia. I ask for your patience as we move through this last part of the pandemic in a manner that maximizes our ability to keep COVID controlled and avoid any further tightening of Public Health restrictions.

The details on what is allowed for faith gatherings are as follows:

Phase 1

- *Outdoor faith gatherings can have up to 10 people. Indoor faith gatherings are not permitted.*
- *Drive-in services are allowed but indoor gathering limits apply to each car (in phase 1 this is household members only per vehicle [the current website is in correct when it says 10 people only for a drive-in service and this is being corrected])*
- *Other requirements for drive-in services are:*
 - *the service or movie is conducted over speakers or by remote radio broadcast;*
 - *there is no contact between cars and no transfer of things between cars; communion can take place if people in a "self-serve" model*
 - *participants remain in their respective vehicle while "attending" the service, unless accessing a washroom facility, and while doing so, must adhering to protocol for gathering limits, physical distancing, and masking requirements*
 - *participants practice physical distancing among vehicles, such that vehicles must be at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart from each other*

- *Wedding ceremonies and funerals can have up to 5 people plus the person conducting the ceremony indoors and up to 10 people plus the person conducting the ceremony outdoors with social distancing. Receptions and visitation are not permitted.*

Phase 2

- *Faith gatherings can have up to 10 people indoors and up to 25 people outdoors with social distancing.*
- *Drive in services permitted*
- *Wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) can have up to 10 people plus the person conducting the ceremony indoors and up to 25 people plus the person conducting the ceremony outdoors.*

Phase 3

- *Faith gatherings that are run by a recognized business or organization - 50% of the venue's capacity up to 100 people indoors and up to 150 people outdoors with social distancing. Large venues can be considered for multiple groups with an approved plan*
- *Drive in services permitted*
- *Wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) - 50% of the venue's capacity up to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors with social distancing when hosted by a business or organization.*

Phase 4

- *Faith gatherings that are run by a recognized business or organization - 50% of the venue's capacity up to 150 people indoors and up to 250 people outdoors with social distancing when hosted by a business or organization. Large venues can be considered for multiple groups with an approved plan.*
- *Drive in services permitted*
- *Wedding ceremonies and funerals (including receptions and visitation) - 50% of the venue's capacity up to 150 people indoors and up to 250 people outdoors with social distancing when hosted by a business or organization.*

While I acknowledge that not all of you will agree with this I trust it provides the clarity you are seeking.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health

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 there!

Faith

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister