



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
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November 6, 2020

Dear Members of Regional Council 15,

The following is an update from my meeting with denominational leaders and Chief Medical Officer of Health for Nova Scotia, Dr. Robert Strang.

We are still being reminded to limit our exposures, and to adhere to guidelines provided by the health authorities. Please refer to the Government of Nova Scotia website for government's response to COVID-19: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

As Nova Scotia is beginning to see more cases, the levels of restriction will remain the same at this time.

Singing in Faith-Based Gatherings:

The information remains the same, as stated in the October 27, 2020 memo.

Dr. Strang has confirmed that the document on the website *COVID-19 Guidance for Faith Based Gatherings* is still the current guidance. The written information for faith-based gatherings from September 23, 2020 is the latest update, and is located using the following link:

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

However, Dr. Strang has informed the group that his team are working on guidelines for congregations who have decided to sing, so they are able to do that as safely as possible.

Christmas Decorating:

Dr. Strang did say it was appropriate to decorate our churches for advent and Christmas, making sure the decorators follow safety measures. Once the decorations are up they are to be left, and not touched, until it is time to remove them again.

Children's Programs for Christmas:

Children's programs are permitted if you put the appropriate protocols in place to make sure children are safely distanced and wearing their masks during the service.

Increased Numbers for Christmas in our Congregation:

When we get closer to Christmas, and if the number of cases remains low, Dr. Strang and his team may give a temporary allowance for extra people for our Christmas Eve services. I may know more after the next meeting with Dr. Strang.

Spiritual Care in Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities:

From Dr. Strang:

"I have reached out to colleagues in the health care system to discuss opportunities to ensure the necessary access for pastoral care for patients/residents."

Dr. Strang is still waiting to hear about this matter.

Spiritual Care in People's Homes:

Advice from Dr. Strang:

It is recognized that Pastoral Care is an important part of the church's life and work. If you need to visit people in their homes, here are the precautions you must take:

1. The person must have the right to say no. You need to arrange your visits ahead of time; no drop in's. You must ask if a visit is possible, and you must give the person the opportunity to let you know if they are not comfortable with a home visit.
2. When visiting, if you have people on your list who are more vulnerable and higher risk (ie. age, fragility, health issues, those in treatment) they must be visited first as to not carry anything to them from another home.
3. You must wash your hands, sanitize, and always wear your mask for the duration of the visit. (Masks must be washed often and or be disposable).

Reminder: Masks must fit snugly around the nose and mouth.

4. You must keep physical distancing at all times while in the home. If a touch is needed; the touch of a hand or a hug, it is recommended that it be towards the end of the visit and be very short in duration. Once you leave the home you must again sanitize your hands.

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

Sincerely,

Faith

Faith March-MacCuish

Executive Minister