

## **Guideline for Reopening the Trinity United and St. James United Churches**

Crossroads Council has met via Zoom to address the issues associated with having in-person services at our 2 churches. The Worship Committee also met to discuss how to open up given the reduced ministerial time (50%) and recognizing that some of our parishioners may be hesitant to return to in-person services at this time. In order to manage church services both in-person as well as maintaining an on-line presence Crossroads will begin with **one** in-person service a week, **alternating** between the two churches in addition to an online service.

Both in-person and online service will be at 10 am. In-person services will begin on October 11<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM at **TRINITY UNITED. Only members of Trinity can attend that in-person service to allow adequate space for their members given the need to 6' distance.** Members of St. James and those not wanting to attend in-person services will continue to worship on line. The following week **October 18<sup>th</sup>** in-person services will be at St. James at 10 AM as well as online for members of Trinity United and those not wanting to attend in-person services. The alternating church schedule will be found at the end of this document but will also be noted in the weekly Update. Sunday School **WILL NOT** be available at either church. Decisions about special services like Christmas Eve will be determined at a later date. There will be no Christmas Concert this year. The remainder of this document will give you directions on entering and exiting the church for services only. We ask that people do not enter the church at other times as this will reduce the need to clean following people being in the building.

### **PURPOSE**

These guidelines are for reopening Trinity United and St. James United Churches for Worship. Our first priority is to offer in person services with consideration to other activities like fundraisers and suppers at a later date.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The current need for these guidelines is in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and loosening of restrictions around gatherings of people in enclosed spaces (indoors). This document takes its guidance from the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the United Church of Canada on the subject. In effect, this is a living document that will change with the pandemic situation and changes in the aforementioned guidance. These guidelines provide Crossroads Pastoral Charge the ability to achieve a staged reopening of our church in a logical and safe manner. These guidelines may appear quite rigid but they have been developed to protect you and the people around you.

The United Church of Canada provides guidance for responsible decision making that considers three phases of reopening a church.

#### *Phase 1: Reopening the Building during the Pandemic*

Small groups may meet in person in small numbers, with social distancing and masks. Worship will continue to be online only, with some exceptions for outdoor worship.

#### *Phase 2: Reopening In-Person Worship during the Pandemic*

Worship and other activities resume in church buildings, with social distancing and other measures.

#### *Phase 3: Full Return during the Pandemic*

For worship and other gatherings, you will still need to consider the health and safety regulations of your province.

Crossroads Guideline reflects on Phase 2. While Crossroads has considered many aspects of how to reopen the church any specific guidance not stated herein will be backed by those provided by the United Church and/or the Province of Nova Scotia.

### **2. BEFORE REOPENING**

Before opening the church to worship and other facility functions

- the Ministry & Personnel Committee (M&P) will meet with each employee and/or contract person to do a wellness check to:
  - a. inquire about general well being and how they managed through the church closure.
  - b. confirm if they have traveled outside NS in the last two weeks.
  - c. confirm if they have been in contact with or exposed to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19.
  - d. ask how they feel about reopening the church for worship and other church functions.
- The Trustees will
  - post approved signage of COVID-19 symptoms at the church entrances;
  - set up a register of persons entering the facility that records name and phone number;
  - provide hand sanitizer at all the entrances and throughout the facility;
  - post approved signage describing proper hand washing protocols;
  - provide liquid hand soap, hot and cold running water, paper towels, and disposal bins in washrooms.
  - remove items from use that cannot be cleaned or disinfected after use.
- The Communications Committee will
  - Publish the appropriate details related to these guidelines in Crossroads Website and will advertise them weekly in the electronic weekly update

### 3. ENTERING / LEAVING THE CHURCH

Everyone coming into the church **must self-assess prior** to arrival. Symptoms are listed here: <https://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca>. If a person displays any one of these symptoms, stay at home, call 8-1-1, and do as directed. Even if you are certain it is “just a cold” PLEASE stay home.

A Council member will greet people at the entrance of the building (while maintaining a 6' distance). Before entering the building, all members must put on a properly fitting mask. One will be available if you forget yours at home.

Upon entering the building:

- Sanitize their hands.
- Record your name and phone number and date/time of entry in the register (**members should have their own pen**).
- Place offering in offering plate as instructed by Council Member.

**4. Inside the Building:** Once inside the building, a member of Council will instruct all members on the seating directions, filling available seats closest to the front of the church (pulpit) first and then moving backward to fill the back pews last.

- Practice social distancing of 2 meters/6 feet (2m/6ft) at all times. This will be strictly enforced and must include no physical contact such as shaking of hands, hugs, etc.
- Wear your mask at all times while inside .
- Each church will work to ensure there is space for each person/family but there could be a Sunday when there is no available 6' seating available. The services will be on-line and can be accessed as they have been.

To exit the building, members will:

- Exit from the back pews first and then continue to leave pews back to front.
- Move out of building without stopping to chat or shake hands.
- Sanitize your hands on the way out
- **Note the time of departure in the register.**

The fundamentals of these guidelines will be published in the Crossroads Update and added to the Church's Website in order to educate the church community on the expectations to be followed when occupying the facility.

## 5. Worship Services

Services in the sanctuary will be laid out to honor the minimum 2m/6ft social distancing rules. Seating will be arranged in clusters of one or a family group (2-4). Seats cannot be moved unless so directed by a church official. To optimize the space available at each church building, chairs will be added to certain pews to allow families to sit together while optimizing the single seats for those arriving by themselves.

Follow the guidance noted above regarding mask, sanitizing, and registration before entering the worship space.

Seating:

- After registering at the front door, proceed directly to your seat in the sanctuary. You may be ushered to your seat.
- Do not move your seat or move yourself from one seat to another. Stay in the first seat you sit in.
- If all the seats are filled, you may be asked to leave and return on another occasion.
- Sit with the family members with whom you bubble. Individuals or bubbles must be 2m/6ft apart at all times from the next person/group.
- Children must stay with their families for the worship service as there will be no Sunday School or Nursery School offered.

Ministry:

- The minister will remain up in the Chancel and **stay 4m/14 ft away from the** congregation.
- There will be no collection plate passed. A basket or plate will be left at the back of the church for attendees to drop their Sunday offerings into as they come in or go out.

Music:

- There will be no congregational singing. Humming may be allowed.
- Non-wind instruments can be used for music.
- **Soloists or small groups of vocalists (2-4) can perform as long as the vocalists are 5m/16ft away from anyone else in the sanctuary.**

Closing and Fellowship:

- The minister will not do a meet and greet at the end of the service.
- At the end of the service, the church will empty one row at a time from the back to the front and all will exit the building without stopping to talk or visit with other parishioners. Weather permitting, people may gather outside but will be required to social distance.
- The Minister will be the last to leave or can leave from another exit, if that is possible.

## 6. RENTALS

Each Church Council can determine if they choose to offer their non-sanctuary areas for rental, provided they ensure all rules are followed regarding self assessments, maintaining contact information and cleaning the areas appropriately. A set of minimum guidelines for renters can be found in Appendix A. If a renter organization has its own guidelines, it should be submitted to the church office at least one week prior to use of the facility. The more stringent guideline will apply.

Each Church Point Council reserves the right to cancel or refuse any event if these guidelines are not adhered to.

## 7. FUNDRAISERS

Any fundraisers operated from either church will be sanctioned by the respective Church Council and will in no way impede or increase risk to Sunday services. These functions will operate similarly as renters (see Appendix

A for details). For Church fundraisers, more space will be utilized to accommodate social distancing guidance. Each Council reserves the right to cancel or refuse any event if these guidelines are not adhered to.

## 8. CLEANING

### Non-Sanctuary Areas:

All touched surfaces must be disinfected after each event. These include door handles, push bars, lock sets, handrails, light switches, chairs, tables, etc.

Washrooms are to be cleaned after each event.

### Sanctuary:

All touched surfaces in the The Sanctuary must be cleaned after each use according to the United Church and Health Authority Protocols.

Microphones should not be shared and need to be cleaned after each use.

Washrooms should be cleaned if used, especially if there will be other people using the building between services or events.

## 9. CONCLUSION

We all need to be vigilant about your own health and address any symptoms that arise. Following these guidelines for reopening Crossroads Churches will allow each of us to enjoy being with our church family once again and worshipping together.

## 10. Crossroads Church Service Schedule

DATE	IN-PERSON SERVICE LOCATION	ONLINE
October 11/20	Trinity United	✓
October 18/20	St. James	✓
October 25/20	Trinity United	✓
November 1/20	St. James	✓
November 8/20	Trinity United	✓
November 15/20	St. James	✓
November 22/20	Trinity United	✓
November 29/20	St. James	✓
December 6/20	Trinity United	✓
December 13/20	St. James	✓
December 20/20	Trinity United	✓
December 27/20	St. James	✓

## 11. REFERENCES

These guidelines are based on guidance from several sources that may change from time to time.

United Church of Canada

- Reopening Churches during COVID-19 (July 2020) [HTTP://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-](http://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-)

community/reopening-churches-during-covid-19

- Relaunching Guidelines - In Person; Ministry UCC Regional Council 15 – (NS and Bermuda) (distributed PDF)

Province of Nova Scotia

- COVID-19: Restriction Updates; July 31 2020 <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/restriction-updates/>
- COVID-19 Guidance for Faith Based Gatherings Jul 24 2020 <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Faith-based-gatherings-guidelines.pdf>

This document has been approved by Crossroads Council on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and will be adjusted with approvals as the situation changes.

John Connely  
Chair Crossroads Council

Crossroads Council September 30th, 2020

## Appendix A Rental Guidelines

The following guidelines have been set forth by Crossroads United Church and must be adhered to by all people entering the church premises. These guidelines are based on the current recommendations of the NS Health Authority. Renters should develop their own protocols as applicable. This guidance is subject to change without notice.

### **Holding a Meeting:**

- Remind members they must not attend in person if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat).
- Notify members as they enter that individuals with symptoms of COVID-19, individuals who have traveled outside of the Atlantic Provinces in the last 14 days, and individuals who have had close contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19 are not allowed to enter this facility.
- Meeting members are to avoid sitting together unless they are from the same household or cohort family.
- Meeting organizer is to remind members to observe physical distancing (2m /6ft).
- Meeting organizer is to encourage hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette while in the meeting.
- Attendees are required to wear non-medical face masks.
- Shaking hands, hugging, touching or passing items between people compromises the two-meter distancing rule and must not occur except between members of the same household or cohort family.
- In order to support NSHA Public Health contact tracing efforts in the event that an attendee tests positive, the meeting organizer should ask individuals to provide their name and contact information. Attendance lists are to be preserved by the meeting organizer and given to the individual church point person ( Trinity United or St. James United) only to be provided to the Health Authority should a potential exposure occur on this site. The meeting organizer should maintain a head count in addition to the contact information.
- If there is an on-site exposure, all members, building staff, and any volunteers on site at the time will be notified that an exposure may have occurred and that attendance lists from that time (and up to two weeks prior, as applicable) will be shared with the NSHA Public Health for contact tracing purposes only.

### **Food:**

- Kitchen facilities at St. Luke's United Church are closed / off limits until further notice. Coffee or food is allowed at the meeting if it has been pre-purchased in a disposable container. Personal use mugs are permitted.
- Drink or food containers should not be shared or passed between members.
- All containers/wrappers are to be placed in garbage/recycling containers that have been provided.

### **Facilities:**

- Meeting organizer is to control entry into and exit from the meeting area. Individuals are to enter or leave the meeting area by family group or cohort family. Individuals are not allowed to enter or leave all at once.
- Meeting organizer is to ensure the meeting area is left in the same condition as when they entered. Place all garbage in containers provided.
- Meeting organizer is to ensure only one person at a time uses the washroom facilities (one person in the male & female washrooms).

## Rental Form

This document is a guide for groups renting facilities from St. James United Church/Trinity United Church. It is to be used to help support activities during the pandemic. As such, this document may be modified/amended at any time without prior notice due to conditions occurring during the pandemic or on recommendations from the Public Health Authorities.

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Church where Meeting Held: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants (including Organizers): \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Organizer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_