The United Church of Canada
L'Eglise Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
21 Wright Street, Sackville, NB E4L 4P8
Tel: (800) 268-3781 ext. 6142 • Email: info4rc15@united-church.ca

Covid-19 Update February 10, 2022 (Nova Scotia)

Dear Regional Council 15 Members (Nova Scotia),

As you may have heard at the February 9, 2022 briefing, Nova Scotia will begin phase 1 of a 3 phase re-opening plan on February 14, 2022. Details of this re-opening plan can be found at https://novascotia.ca/reopening-plan/. The following are the specific details for faith gatherings:

- Regular faith services - 50% of the venue's capacity (indoor and outdoor) with social distancing and masks. Congregational singing is permitted with masks. Live music is permitted with musicians following the performing arts gathering limit. Wearing a mask is required when performing (except when you're singing or playing a wind instrument). Musicians need to maintain a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from others when they're singing or playing a wind instrument. Masks are recommended for choirs. Proof of full Vaccination not required.

- Informal faith gatherings can have up to 25 people (household members and consistent social group) plus 1 person conducting the service (indoor and outdoor) without proof of full vaccination and social distancing. Masks may be required if you're in a public place with mask requirements.

- Weddings and funerals (including visitation and receptions) hosted by a business or organization - 50% of the venue's capacity (indoor & outdoor) with social distancing and masks. Congregational singing is permitted with masks. Live music is permitted with musicians following the performing arts gathering limit. Wearing a mask is required when performing (except when singing or playing wind instrument). Musicians need to maintain a minimum physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from others when they're singing or playing a wind instrument. Masks are recommended for choirs. Proof of full vaccination is required.

- Informal wedding ceremonies can have up to 25 people (household members and consistent social group) plus 1 person conducting the ceremony (indoor and outdoor) without proof of full vaccination and social distancing. Masks may be required if you're in a public place with mask requirements.

- Funeral services hosted by a business or organization (indoor and outdoor) can have up to 25 people plus the person conducting the ceremony and funeral home staff without proof of full vaccination. Masks are required (indoor and outdoor). Receptions and visitation are only permitted with proof of vaccination.

To clarify:

Faith services still do not require proof of vaccination but **other activities by faith organizations, including weddings and funerals, still do**. The language in the bullets above intend to highlight the circumstances under which faith gatherings, weddings and funerals can happen without requiring proof of vaccination. Faith activities that take place in a home setting, such as a bible study, and within the informal gathering requirements also do not need proof of vaccination.

Please note:

As stated in previous memos, please understand that just because we can does not mean that you must. If your congregation would like to take opening up a little more slowly that is within the authority of the governing body to make that decision. It is important that Ministry and Personnel Committees check in with staff to ensure that they are doing well during the opening up phases. There will be people who are happy to jump in and be fully open and others who are still reluctant and afraid. It is important that people are heard and that the decisions you make are communicated clearly to the community of faith.

As we begin to resume activities, please consider these ongoing recommendations:

Sacraments Communion:

- Serve in pre-packaged or individual portions.
- Have a small number of designated servers.
- Servers and recipients must not have physical contact.
- Servers are required to wear a non-medical mask, and wash or sanitize their hands immediately before and after serving.
- Recipients are also recommended to wash or sanitize their hands before and after consuming.

Baptism:

- For infant baptism, the parents should be the only ones to hold the baby.
- The officiant will sanitize hands before the baptism.
- For infant, child and adult baptism, water cannot be shared. Not a common font, have a separate bowl for each individual who will be baptized.
- If you have a need to hold the baby, please make sure the parents have been asked and that they know they have the right to decline.

Pastoral Care:

- Be cautious and limit the interaction you have with varied groups of people.
- Avoid visiting multiple institutions, hospitals, nursing care homes in the same day/week.
- You must follow the regulations of the institution; check before going.
- Make sure you have prior permission before visiting someone in their private home.
- Make sure you keep a list of those visited and when.

Thank you for your efforts to keep our communities safe.

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

Sincerely,

Faith March-MacCuish

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister

February 10, 2022