



August 30, 2020

Dear friends,

Since the middle of March, the world has been dealing with the COVID pandemic. In late March our national and synodical bishops strongly recommended closing our physical worship spaces. As the magnitude of the threat became clearer and as direction came from the national and provincial health authorities most of our congregations closed their worship spaces for several months.

By early June, following the Sask government announcement of the possibility of safely re-opening worship spaces, synod, led by epidemiologist and rostered minister Rev. Ali Tote, reviewed the health authority directives, consulted with rostered and lay leadership by Zoom call, and presented a detailed plan and checklist for congregations considering whether to re-open worship spaces.

During the summer our congregations across the synod have handled the pandemic in different ways, consistent with their context. Most of our urban congregations kept worship spaces closed, and gathered remotely through YouTube, Zoom or Facebook Live or some other medium. A number of our town and country parishes who often were not able to meet remotely, began to meet following the health authority directives and synod guidelines.

With September approaching and schools re-opening, our context is changing. Synod met with about 90 of our rostered and lay leadership through Zoom firstly to gather information on what congregations were experiencing and considering as September approached. In the next week, synod, again led by Dr. Ali Tote, reviewed the revised health directives, and met again with the leadership to present and discuss synod recommendations for approaching the fall.

After consulting with faith community leadership, and reviewing church re-opening abroad, synod at this time (August 30th, 2020) is recommending re-opening worship spaces with close adherence to health authority directives and synod guidelines. This is a recommendation from synod. Faith communities make the decision for their own context. Please review the following documents to assist you in making your decision about re-opening your worship space.

- ❖ [Saskatchewan Health Authority Directives for Faith Communities](#)
- ❖ [Synod Rationale and Recommendation](#) for re-opening worship spaces
- ❖ [Synod Revised Guidelines to Administer Provincial Directives](#) for re-opening worship spaces (August 30, 2020).
- ❖ [Checklist for re-opening](#) worship spaces

Peace,

Bishop Sid