

Checklist for churches re-opening worship spaces during COVID-19 (Adapted from the Checklist from the Synod of Alberta and the Territories)

	Person Responsible	Done
Preparing the facility		
Clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings.		
Designate separate entrance and exit with signage.		
Place hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol content at the entrance and exit and throughout the facility. If Holy Communion will be celebrated, have hand sanitizer available for worshippers as they proceed to the table.		
Put up posters educating worshippers about COVID-19 and distancing protocols.		
Determine whether your usual worship space is the best place for worship at this time. Perhaps you have a fellowship hall that is larger and more suitable just now. Consider worshipping outdoors first.		
Clearly indicate the route worshippers are to use from the entry to the worship space and indicate proper physical distancing, perhaps with markers on the floor.		
Close common areas.		
Close rooms that will not be in use.		
Remove all shared items such as brochures and hymnals, and any soft surfaces such as children's busy bags and stuffed animals.		
To indicate proper physical distancing, rearrange chairs or rope off every second pew.		
Ensure that worship leaders will have appropriate physical distance from each other and will have their own microphones.		
Place floor indicators to show physical distance for those who are waiting to receive Holy Communion.		
Designate how many people will be allowed in a washroom at one time; post a sign with floor indicators in the hallway to show physical distance for those who are waiting.		
Preparing worshippers		
Communicate that staff, volunteers and worshippers who are ill or who have been exposed to COVID-19 must stay home.		

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Communicate that those with underlying medical conditions and those over 65 years old are at a higher risk of experiencing worse symptoms than others if they contract the virus.		
Communicate changes to worship space.		
Communicate that worshipers are asked to keep a 6 ft physical distance at all times, practice good hand hygiene and sneeze into their elbows. It is recommended that worshipers wear non-medical masks when in the church.		
Children are to remain with their parents at all times.		
Communicate changes to the worship service in advance (e.g., no congregational singing, reception of Holy Communion, no greeting or coffee hour before or after service).		
Preparing to Worship		
The number of people allowed in the worship space is determined as per provincial guidelines according to phase, and a plan is in place to determine how many services will be offered in order to accommodate those who would wish to worship.		
A plan is in place to determine who will worship when.		
A plan is in place to continue to include in worship those who will not attend in-person worship.		
A list is kept of worshipers, staff and volunteers at all services in case someone later tests positive for COVID-19 and their movements must be traced. This list will be kept for two weeks before it will be destroyed or deleted.		
Worship is planned in accordance with Public Health guidelines.		
Congregants are reminded to clean their hands on entry and exit.		
A plan is in place to help worshipers participate in the service. A single-use bulletin is left on chairs or pews AND/OR the bulletin is projected on a screen or available online.		
No congregational singing is permitted. Recorded or streamed music may be played. Soloists and instrumentalists may provide music following recommendations for safe distancing and/or barriers.		

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Children will remain with their parents, even if a children's time is offered.		
The Peace is shared without physical contact.		
The offering plate is neither circulated nor presented at the altar. There is a plan to receive gifts safely. Encourage worshipers to make contributions through electronic means.		
A plan is in place to offer the sacraments safely.		
People are designated to clean and disinfect the worship space between services.		
Holy Communion		
Those preparing the elements and vessels for Holy Communion wear masks and use excellent hygiene procedures.		
Pastors and assistants wash and sanitize their hands before blessing the elements and distributing Holy Communion. In phase three, physical communion distribution is not encouraged. Communicants serve themselves from individually prepared communion safely placed one apart from another.		
If the presiding minister has underlying health conditions (although not sick) or is otherwise vulnerable, they may have an assistant distribute Holy Communion.		
Pastors and assistants wear a mask when distributing Holy Communion. Communicants are advised to also wear a mask.		
Worshipers are directed to servers in an organized fashion, leaving physical distance between family groups.		
Communicants sanitize their hands as they proceed to the table.		
It is recommended that to minimize close contact, the communicant pauses 2 metres away from the minister, who says, "The body of Christ," to which the response "Amen" is given. The minister should take special care not to touch the communicant, or should pause to wash hands again, if necessary.		
Communion in one kind is recognized as a full experience of the Sacrament. Consider offering bread only.		
Wafers or gluten-free crackers require less handling than bread.		
Common cup and intinction are not permitted.		
If wine or grape juice is offered, it must be distributed in individual glasses, with enough room around each that worshipers touch only their own glass.		

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Worshippers are directed back to their seats in an organized fashion, leaving physical distance between family groups.		
Pastors and assistants wash and sanitize their hands after distribution.		
Holy Baptism		
The font is sanitized and filled with clean water.		
The person to be baptized, if an infant, remains in the arms of their family.		
Family groups at the font maintain physical distance and each person wears a mask.		
The pastor wears a mask at the font.		
Water is poured on the baptized with a shell.		
The baptized is anointed with oil in a cotton ball.		
A member of the baptismal party lights the baptismal candle from the paschal candle as the words of presentation are said.		
Weddings and Funerals		
Weddings, funerals, and other types of services must follow the same guidelines as other worship services.		
General		
Staff and volunteers receive information and training about new processes.		
Staff and volunteers have access to masks and hand sanitizer.		
Offering counters have access to gloves.		
People are designated to clean and sanitize high traffic areas, including washrooms, between services.		
Leaders remain aware of new Public Health guidelines. Be prepared to discontinue in-person worship if levels of infection rise.		
Renters/Outside Groups		
Congregations may permit outside groups to use the facility providing they follow all health guidelines regarding physical distancing, etc., and the congregation/rental groups have resources to handle the cleaning requirements between each use. Facility rentals should be suspended if groups cannot or will not adhere to gathering restrictions.		
Consider requesting written details as to how the rental group will meet health guidelines, prior to their use of the facility.		