



**A Checklist  
for in-Person Worship  
in the diocese of Qu'Appelle  
during phase 3 of the  
Re-Open Saskatchewan Provincial Covid 19 Plan 2020  
REVISED August 27, 2020**

**Diocesan Effective Date: September 1, 2020**

As noted in the Saskatchewan Government Covid 19 Guidelines all businesses, and places of worship, must be, in compliance with the guidelines.

The initial guidelines for places of worship, below, are intended to support a return to, in-person, services.

Further guidelines are still being developed and will address additional critical services, pastoral care and community supports provided by faith-based institutions.

**Diocesan Council MOTION:**

*That permission be given to the parishes and congregations to reopen September 1, 2020 provided they have engaged in the education and communication of the guidelines and have signed on to the plan through clergy and vestry decision. The plan must be submitted and have diocesan approval.*

*That this opening date be reconsidered by Executive Committee prior to September to take into account any change in guidelines and health emergency directives.*

*That a detailed information and education plan be shared with all parishes and congregations.*

*That weddings and funerals be permissible in the parish prior to September 1, 2020 with approval of the parish clergy, vestry and the Bishop and be in accordance with the government and diocesan guidelines.*

**Passed unanimously**

**The Government (phase 3) guidelines** below are intended to allow places of worship, that choose to return to service, to do so safely and guard against the transmission of COVID-19.

Please make sure all clergy, worship leaders vestry and parish council members have read the guidelines thoroughly.

Having read through the guidelines the vestry or parish council can only return to in-person services at the agreed date by diocesan council and a date a parish is able to safely implement the controls identified in these guidelines, and church wardens and incumbent have signed the document below.

The allowable occupancy of a room or worship space is 30% of the defined occupancy rate up to a maximum of 150 individuals, for the initial (phase 3) stage of re-opening.

Delivering services virtually, via email or through remote drive-in service (see p.40 of the SK Covid19 guidelines) is encouraged.

Please note that the Government guidelines, will be adapted over the coming weeks, as discussions continue regarding matters that have not yet been addressed; matters where greater clarity is needed, and even, within weeks, a possible phase 4.

**Remember that your parish will not have to move to a particular re-opening phase on the same timing as other parishes do, but you may not move to the next phase until my office receives your signed intent and have informed you that you may do so.**

Every parish, its buildings, its capacities and its leadership are different. Each parish, therefore, using this document must discern the appropriate actions and timing, post September 1, in terms of when to reopen its building and what activities to offer.

If you have any questions about this process for re-opening, contact your Regional Archdeacon.

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Bishop Rob Hardwick

## **SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES COVID 19 PHASE 3 FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP**

For general workplace guidelines, please refer to Saskatchewan Government COVID-19 Workplace Information on [P. 13](#). All businesses (now includes places of worship) operating in Saskatchewan must be in compliance with these guidelines. The information below provides specific information for places of worship.

The Government of Saskatchewan, in consultation with leaders from faith communities in the province, developed guidelines for places of worship to resume service. These guidelines apply to indoor and outdoor gatherings, except where more specific provincial guidance exists, such as the Drive-in or Remote Worship Services Guidelines on [P. 40](#).

These initial guidelines are intended to support a return to in-person services for places of worship.

### **Government Guidelines for Accommodating In-Person Worship**

- The allowable occupancy of a room or worship space is 30% of the defined occupancy rate up to a maximum of 30 individuals for the initial stage of re-opening.
- Delivering services virtually or through remote delivery such as drive-in service is encouraged.
- Where possible, registration of participants is encouraged to effectively manage the number of individuals attending. Registration should be facilitated to discourage attendees from common-use items such as pens and pencils.
- Attendees who are medically vulnerable are strongly encouraged to delay their return to services and continue to participate in services online, where possible.
- Attendees, employees and volunteers are required to stay home if sick or symptomatic.
- Places of worship will be required to identify measures by which entry and exit is managed to ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Physical distancing of two metres be maintained between each individual extended household.
- Promote physical distancing by marking the directional flow of people through buildings and areas. Mark seating areas and post visual reminders to observe physical distancing.
- Individuals from the same extended household may be seated together and should remain in place once they are seated.
- Seating (or designated worship space) must be arranged so that physical distancing can be observed at all times. Consideration must be given to how people enter and exit pews and other seating areas. A minimum of two metres must be maintained between household groups.
- If multiple gatherings are held on a single day, the start and end times must allow those who attend one gathering to exit safely, avoiding contact with those arriving for the next gathering. Time is needed to clean and disinfect common surfaces between services.
- Dismissal of gatherings should be done in a way that supports physical distancing.
- All ancillary events, such as social events, should be postponed for the immediate future.
- Where possible, consider managing parking lot assignments to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

### **Guidelines for Hygiene and Cleaning**

- As part of the return to service, places of worship will be required to enhance cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Review cleaning and disinfection practices on [P. 16](#) Saskatchewan Government Covid 19 guidelines and the Ecclesiastical Insurance guidelines.

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of commonly contacted areas, including seating areas, doorknobs, handles, ceremonial objects, elevator buttons, railings and light switches.
- Encourage everyone to practicing proper hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette, including:
  - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty and handwashing isn't available.
  - Use hand sanitizer of least 70 per cent alcohol approved by Health Canada (DIN and NPN).
  - Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
- Manage access to washrooms in a way to promote social distancing and increase cleaning and disinfection. Ensure washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and that warm running water is available.
- Garbage bins should be emptied frequently.
- Place an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in dispensers or provide hand washing stations near doors and other high-traffic areas.

### **Guidelines for Higher-Risk Activities**

- All physical contact, such as handshaking or passing objects between individuals, is not permitted. Ushers, greeters or other guest services must maintain social distancing and avoid physical contact with worshippers.
- Microphones cannot be shared between individuals due to the difficulty of cleaning and disinfecting these devices. Minimize the number of attendees providing readings or performing other activities that would require the use of a microphone.
- Singing is a high-risk activity because the virus can be transmitted through saliva or respiratory droplets. One documented COVID-19 outbreak resulted in the spread of the virus to 87 per cent of choir attendees from one infected person. Therefore, singing is not recommended at this time. However, if you do sing masks **MUST** be worn.
- The use of woodwind and brass instruments may also increase the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus due to the aerosolized respiratory fluids. As such, they are not recommended at this time.
- Where leaders of services are required to sing, they must increase the distance between the congregation to prevent transmission of respiratory droplets and/or wear a mask.
- Ceremonies or rituals that involve physical contact between individuals, such as the handling of the Torah scroll or baptism, should be modified to maintain physical distancing. Where physical distancing is not possible, participants will be required to mitigate the risk by wearing personal protective equipment and increased hand hygiene.
- The celebration of communion raises specific challenges because of the possibility of inadvertently transmitting the virus.
- Faith communities centred on a communion ritual must exercise extreme caution if they wish to proceed with offering communion.
- Denominations or families of churches wishing to offer communion at this time will be required to develop protocols by which the communion can be offered in a way that safeguards the health of the communicants and celebrant. (Please see diocesan guidelines)
- The use of a common cup is not permissible.

- Passing of offering baskets will not be permitted. Alternatives are encouraged, such as online giving options or a depository to accept offerings.
- Objects that cannot be disinfected between uses should not be distributed. If objects cannot be disinfected, the place of worship must determine the means by which they can be discarded after use to prevent contamination, such as paper bulletins or other single-use materials.
- Books and other common-use items should be removed from use, if possible. Projecting materials or distribution of single-use materials can be considered. Books or items that can't be disinfected should be removed and held for 72 hours before being brought back into use.
- Food and beverage service must be suspended at this time.



Additional Diocesan Guidelines	Person Responsible	Done
<b>Preparing the facility</b>		
Put up posters educating worshipers about COVID-19 protocols.		
Determine whether your usual worship space is the best place for worship at this time. Perhaps you have a hall that is larger and more suitable just now.		
Clearly indicate the route worshipers 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.		
<b>Preparing Worshippers</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Done</b>

Communicate that staff, volunteers and worshipers who are ill or who have been exposed to COVID-19 must stay home.		
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 that worshipers are asked to keep physical distance at all times, practice good hand hygiene and sneeze or cough into their elbows. Encourage worshipers to wear non-medical masks when in church.		
Children to remain with their parents even if children's time is offered.		
Communicate changes to the worship service in advance e.g., no congregational singing, guidelines for reception of Holy Communion, no greeting no coffee hour before or after service.		
<b>Preparing to Worship</b>		
The number of people allowed in the worship space is determined (30% of defined capacity up to 150 people, whichever is lowest)		
Formulate a plan to determine how many services will be offered in order to accommodate those who would wish to worship.		
The plan should continue to include in worship, those who will not attend 'in-person' worship.		
Keep a list of worshipers, staff and volunteers at all, in-person, services in case someone later tests positive for COVID-19 and their movements must be traced. List to be kept for 4 weeks before destroyed or deleted.		
Make sure all worship is planned in accordance with Public Health and diocesan guidelines.		
Congregational singing is not recommended – if you do sing you MUST wear a mask. Recorded or streamed music may be played. Soloists and instrumentalists may provide music following recommendations for safe distancing and/or barriers. No woodwind or brass instruments to be used.		
The Peace is not to be shared.		
The offering plate is neither circulated nor presented at the altar.		
Encourage worshipers to make contributions through electronic means.		
People are designated to clean and disinfect the worship space between services.		
<b>Holy Communion - please see the extra diocesan guidelines paper</b>		

Those preparing the elements and vessels for Holy Communion use excellent hygiene procedures. Pastors and assistants wash and sanitize their hands before Eucharistic Prayer and after distributing Communion. Ciborium to be covered with a cloth during the Eucharistic Prayer Only the celebrant to consume the priest wafer and chalice contents		
If the presiding minister has underlying health conditions (although not sick) or is otherwise vulnerable, an assistant distribute Holy Communion.		
Clergy and assistants wear a mask when distributing Holy Communion.		
Clergy and assistants do not wear gloves when distributing Holy Communion.		
Worshippers 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 two 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. No common wine shared, only the celebrant.		
Wafers or gluten-free crackers require less handling than a loaf of bread.		
Common cup and intinction are <u>not</u> permitted.		
Worshippers are directed back to their seats in an organized fashion, leaving physical distance between family groups. If possible, return to pews a different way		
Clergy and assistants wash and sanitize their hands before and after distribution.		
<b>Holy Baptism</b>		
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.		
Clergy wear 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.		
<b>Weddings and Funerals</b>		
Gatherings of 30% capacity up to a maximum of 150 people practising physical distancing are permissible.		
Clergy to keep 6 feet from the couple. Mask worn at the signing of the registers. Full cleaning protocols, as above, be adhered to.		

General	Person Responsible	Done
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.		
<b>Renters/Outside Groups</b>		
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.		

**The above guidelines to be read thoroughly by all Clergy, Church Wardens, Parish Council and Vestry members**

**MOTION** of \_\_\_\_\_ vestry or parish council on \_\_\_\_\_ 2020

Having read the guidelines and considered the responsibilities:

- (a) we will, subject to diocesan approval, re-open for ‘in-person’ worship and for other church meetings/gatherings \_\_\_\_\_ 2020
- (b) we will not re-open for ‘in-person’ worship or other church meetings/gatherings until further consideration by vestry or parish council on \_\_\_\_\_ 2020

Signed

**Incumbent**

**Rector’s Warden**

**People’s Warden**