

Bishop  
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## **THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE** *Anglican Church of Canada*

June 13, 2020

COVID 19 PANDEMIC – Re-Open Saskatchewan ‘Places of Worship.

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

There has been much shared recently by the Saskatchewan Government regarding the ‘Places of Worship Guidelines for phase 3 of the Re-Open Saskatchewan Pandemic Plan’. These are general guidelines, applying to all faith groups and have been amended again this past week.

The latest guidelines still state that virtual services are the safest solution and is the option recommended by public health officials. Nevertheless, the guidelines also stipulate how places of worship may re-open for worship and other celebration of life ceremonies from June 8, 2020. Please read the guidelines at [www.saskatchewan.ca/re-open](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/re-open).

Your **diocesan council** met June 6. This past week I have met with clergy and churchwardens from parishes across our diocese. Yesterday the executive committee met to review this week’s changes to the guidelines and the questions from the Archdeaconry meetings.

Although there has been a considerable expansion to the guidelines this week in terms of congregational size and the inclusion of children and youth day camps, there are many safety measures and protocols to consider. The executive committee has listened to many voices this week. Some favour a delay in re-opening churches in the diocese and some favour re-opening as soon as possible.

The executive committee, like the diocesan council on June 6, still recommend a **September 1st re-open date** and would encourage continued virtual worship to be provided wherever possible.

Nevertheless, the executive committee and myself, resolved June 12, that **if** clergy, churchwardens and their vestry, having read the guidelines thoroughly, can demonstrate that their church will strictly abide by those guidelines, the vestry through their clergy and wardens may petition the bishop for permission to re-open on an agreed date before September 1, 2020. Or, they may petition to partially re-open their church for certain ministries before September.

The official document of permission will require the clergy and churchwardens to sign to signify their church’s readiness and compliance.

## Key points from the Government and Diocesan Guidelines:

- Places of worship should only return to service once they are able to safely implement the controls identified in the guidelines.
- PLEASE NOTE: Though the one-third defined occupancy rate of the facility to a maximum congregational size increased this week to 150, if permission is granted by the bishop to a vestry, **the maximum number of 30 will apply until September 1<sup>st</sup>.**
- The maximum of 150 will only be considered if a service or celebration of life ceremony is outdoors and complies to the unique and somewhat complicated guidelines re cohorts of 30 people, distancing by 2 meters, and that each cohort is separated by 5 meters on all sides.

If non-compliance of the guidelines is discovered, the bishop's permission will be withdrawn.

The faith Leaders working group continue to work with members of the Covid19 response team on a number of issues and I will update the guidelines for vestry consideration as soon as further changes are known. An educational piece will also be produced as soon as possible to aid parishes and clergy in safe protocols and their responsibilities.

I remain yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ R. Hardwick". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Rt. Revd. Rob Hardwick  
Diocese of Qu'Appelle

Collect Prayer for Proper 11

Almighty God,  
without you we are not able to please you.  
Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit  
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.