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**Guidelines in effect as of 25 January 2022**

**within the Anglican Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador**

**The following guidance will be implemented in phases as follows:**

**In-person worship gatherings, and the re-opening of Church Offices, may resume 30 January 2022;**

**In-person Sunday School, and other Youth Gatherings, may resume 06 February 2022 (pending Government approval);**

**Vestry and Committee Meetings may resume 06 February 2022;**

**In-person fundraising events, and parish-run social gatherings, may resume 13 February 2022.**

**The use of Church Buildings by a recognized business or organization is permitted immediately.**

**The use of Church Buildings for functions organized by private individuals, such as birthday parties, anniversaries, showers, and such, is NOT permitted until further notice.**

**In-person gatherings within Church buildings are permitted with STRICT ADHERENCE to the following guidelines:**

Those 12 years old and over must be fully vaccinated (or have an approved medical exemption) and provide proof of the same, in order to attend the gathering.

There shall be no more than 50 people IN TOTAL, or 25% capacity, whichever is less. Physical distancing between households must be maintained at all times. People who are a part of a household's 10 close, consistent contacts may sit with the household without physical distancing. People should be instructed, as they arrive, that they must maintain physical distancing at all times and may only sit with those who are a part of their 10 close and consistent contacts.

Ventilation MUST be utilized while people are gathered in so far as comfort and security is not compromised. People should be encouraged to leave their jackets on while in the Church for their comfort. For those Churches that cannot utilize ventilation while gathered, singing is discouraged during the gathering except as provided by a soloist.

Masks must be worn at ALL TIMES by all those gathered. Masks may not be removed for any reason other than to consume the Eucharist. Public speakers and soloists may remove their masks while speaking or singing in so far as they are physically distanced from others.

Services that involve congregational singing may NOT exceed 60 minutes in duration. Singing may NOT exceed 30 minutes of that 60-minute time frame.

Due to restrictions in the total number of people that may gather, pre-registration for gatherings is suggested. A Contact Tracing List for each gathering is mandatory and such lists should be kept on file for a minimum of 14 days following the gathering. Such Contact Tracing Lists should include the name, telephone number, and, where applicable, email address of those attending the gathering.

Social gatherings that normally occur before and after a service, such as communal dinners and lunches, should be avoided at this time.

Churches should offer Face Mask and Hand Sanitation Stations at the entry/exit point of any gathering.

High Touch Surfaces within any gathering space must be disinfected using Health Canada approved disinfectant, applied according to manufacturer’s instructions, between gatherings. Reduce the number of doors that people must touch to enter any gathering by propping, and leaving open, all doorways using doorstops.

Washrooms should be stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, with warm running water available. In instances where warm running water is not available, hand sanitizer should be provided. Contactless garbage bins should also be made available.

Multiple gatherings held on a single day, in a particular space, should be avoided. Yet, if necessary, the start and end times must allow for attendees who are exiting one gathering to avoid contact with those arriving for the next gathering. There must also be sufficient time for disinfection of high-touch surfaces between the gatherings. If singing has taken place in a gathering, one hour of ventilation time must occur before the space can be utilized again.

Handshaking, hugging, touching, or passing objects between people, or other forms of physical contact are not permitted.

Sharing of the Peace through physical contact is not permitted.

The passing of the collection plate is not permitted – online donations or a depository to accept offerings should be provided.

No water should be left in the Font or in any Holy Water stoop. Votives and other public use, high touch liturgical items should be removed or use thereof prohibited.

Liturgical actions requiring physical contact will need to be adjusted in so far as is possible. In instances where physical contact is absolutely required, hands must be sanitized immediately before and immediately after physical contact occurs.

Common use items such as books and hymnals may be used if set aside for at least 24 hours between uses. Discard of printed materials after the service is complete.

Bulletins, Orders of Service, and/or Common Use Worship Books should be placed in the pews prior to people arriving. If distributing such items as people arrive, distribution should be done by designated individuals who should regularly disinfect their hands while distributing items. Those distributing materials, as well as those who are greeting, directing, or coming in regular contact with those in attendance, must wear a mask and should practice physical distancing at all times.

Handheld or stationary microphones should not be shared unless they are disinfected between uses. Limit the number of people providing readings or other activities that need a microphone.

Processions/Recessions are to be avoided wherever possible. Unnecessary movement among those gathered must be limited. Receiving Lines are not permitted.

When Celebrating the Eucharist, the Sharing of the Common Cup, either for consuming or touching, is NOT permitted at this time. Communion can only be administered in one-kind and should be administered while those gathered remain in their pews.

During Baptism, the cleric should not hold the baby, but ask a parent to do so for the duration of the service. The parents will pour the water over the infant’s head, and wipe the head, during the baptism. The parents would also light the baptismal candle without the use of an intermediary. When blessing the water, the cleric should not make contact with the water. Baptism liturgies with multiple candidates are prohibited at this time for fact that the water of Baptism cannot be used upon more than one person. Once a baptism is complete, the water must be disposed of and not used for other baptisms or other purposes.

For Weddings, the priest should not touch the rings to bless them, nor touch the couple’s hands as part of a prayer or blessing (the tying of the knot). The rings can be placed upon the cleric’s book by the person in possession of the rings, blessed without touching them, and then the couple can retrieve them from the book.

All those signing the register should sanitize their hands before signing, complete all the signatures necessary for them, and then sanitize them again. Individual pens for each signatory should be used.

The wedding couple may remove their masks during the wedding ceremony if they are physically distanced from guests and the officiant. For wedding photos, masks may be removed for the photo(s) if participants are a part of each other’s 10 close, consistent contacts or physical distancing between participants can be achieved while taking the photo.

For Funerals of which the Church building is normally used for public visitation with the family, visitation is limited to one household at a time. Only members of the immediate family, being the spouse, children, parents, and/or siblings, may remain with the deceased. Only those 12 years old and over who are fully vaccinated, and have provided proof of the same, may participate in public visitation. Private viewing may be arranged for those who are unvaccinated in so far as the family of the deceased agree to the same.

Funerals, Weddings, or Baptisms that are necessary to be accommodated for those families of which members may not all be fully vaccinated, the above protocols apply, yet masks must be worn at all times by those gathered (including the officiant and soloists) and congregational singing is not permitted.

**Sunday School and other Youth Gatherings and Activities**

Youth gatherings are permitted in so far as physical distancing can be maintained **at all times** between participants. The guidance provided within this document should be adhered to in so far as it is applicable.

The offering of infant and childminding during worship is not recommended at this time. Preschool-aged children should stay with their families for the duration of the service.

**Use of Church Property for indoor Parish run Social Gatherings and/or Meetings**

Parishes are permitted to hold indoor social gatherings and/or meetings, such as fundraising events, Vestry Meetings, ACW, DAMA, as examples. The above-noted protocols are to be adhered to with respect to any such gathering in so far as they are applicable to the specific gathering.

Do not share food or serving utensils. If food is necessary, have one individual designated to serve food after washing their hands and while wearing a non-medical mask. There should be no self-serve options such as trays of cookies, bowls of chips, or potlucks.

**Church Offices**

Church Offices may reopen to the public. Physical distancing should be practiced at all times, high touch surfaces should be disinfected frequently, masks should be utilized, and ventilation utilized in so far as comfort and security is not compromised.

**Use of Church Buildings by a recognized Business or Organization**

Recognized Businesses and Organizations are permitted use of our property in so far as they are authorized to operate by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and if being fully compliant with all Public Health Regulations and Guidance.

**Use of Church Buildings by Private Individuals**

Parishes are not permitted to rent out our facilities for private social gatherings such as Birthday Parties, Anniversaries, Showers, etc. until further notice.

**Visitation and Home Communions**

Visitation and Home Communions should be avoided in so far as emergent and urgent pastoral considerations dictate. Visitation restrictions for Acute Care, Long Term Care, and Personal Care Facilities are in place and Clergy should check with the facility before making any visit, or responding to any request for a visit. Such visits should only be for emergent and urgent pastoral reasons.