



The Diocese of Rupert's Land

The Right Reverend Geoffrey Woodcroft
Bishop of Rupert's Land

July 29, 2020

To parish corporations,

Please share with members of your parish, as you consider best.

Greetings to you, as we travel this extraordinary path in the name of Christ.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8.38-39

God prepares and empowers the Body of Christ for radical hospitality. We are that Body, and nothing will separate us from the love that God pours through us into the world. As we continue our controlled opening of worship and gathering spaces, and make provisions for others to use those spaces, let us be mindful of God's work through us. For Paul, the Church was never an entity unto itself, but God's gift of loving presence to the world in which we live. We are in a unique and wonderful position to lead and to minister in these extraordinary days.

The attached revised protocols are intended for parishes to make reasonable, safe, and sound decisions regarding reopening, or in other cases to remain closed, for corporate worship. I encourage parishes to be creative while incorporating these protocols into the worship and gathering life of the community; there is no *One Size Fits All* method, the protocols will guide you in making great decisions.

Lastly, on behalf of your Diocese, thank you for the gifts, skill and courage that you have employed through 2020 to not only meet the needs of ministry and mission, but also to further the great news that God's sovereignty has come near, is at hand, and is deep within. I am so fortunate to hear the stories, hopes and resilience of disciples everyday during these uncertain times. You are a blessing to many.

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May you continue in the rich blessings and call of our creator, and be quick to build-up one another for our life in ministry.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '+ Geoffrey', with a cross symbol to the left.

+ Geoffrey

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Protocols for designing your reopening plan for gathering in Diocese of Rupert's Land facilities.

July 29, 2020

General protocols

- People with pre-existing health conditions, or are over 65 years of age, are urged to take necessary precautions to reduce infection risk when attending all diocese of Rupert's Land gathered events, this includes parish gatherings
- No parish or worship community is compelled to open at this time; each community may use discretion to decide when the time is best for them to re-open
- If the most recent protocols or public health protocols cannot be practiced do not open
- Past protocols regarding the recording or live-streaming of worship and devotions, or gatherings of 10 persons and under remain applicable
- The May 5, 2020 protocol is no longer applicable for reopening for gatherings

It is the responsibility of parish corporations:

- To ensure that current protocols, as prescribed by the diocese and local public health authorities, are understood and practiced at gatherings. The corporation may choose to form a parish health advisory group for this purpose
- To review the protocols and their implementation monthly, ensuring that minimum risk for infection is maintained
- To maintain a ledger/registration book for the purpose of gathering names and contact information for all gathered attendees at every gathering for **contact tracing** in the event that a case of COVID 19 is detected following one of your events
- To ensure that all washroom facilities are immediately sanitized after each use.
- To have a mask ready to put-on should any other person near you fail to observe physical distancing

Communications

- To update parish community members on protocols, best practices and other pertinent information like arrival protocols, registering and physical distancing
- To ensure that parish members that are unable to attend gatherings have a regular (that is bi-weekly or monthly) check-in
- To ensure that the following signage is posted in strategic marshalling areas: traffic flow diagrams, signage to best maintain physical distancing, entrance instructions along with greeter nametags and all signage from local public health authorities pertaining to your gatherings (including attendance capacity)
- To communicate with your territorial archdeacon for further clarification, as required

It is the responsibility of gathering participants:

- To have not travelled east of Terrace Bay, Ontario in the last 14 days
- To not attend gatherings if feeling unwell, have a cough or sniffles, or fever/chills (NOTE: where anyone suffers from seasonal allergies, the participant, as noted above, is expected to do due diligence to reduce risk of infection during a gathering event, and to inform a leader of the gathering that their condition is in no way COVID 19 related)
- To have not been in contact with anyone feeling unwell or diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- To observe physical distancing (2 meters), frequent hand hygiene (*and face washing if necessary*) according to public health protocols
- To wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible
- To keep all belongings with them, this includes coats

Best Practices

While observing physical distancing, and not exceeding the maximum attendees at indoor and outdoor events as set-out by the Government of Manitoba (for Manitoban Communities) and the Government of Ontario (for Ontario Communities), communities may gather for meetings, allow renter usage, social/pastoral/private devotional time, worship, in short, regular usage.

- Food and beverage may be catered to attendees by a catering agency, or community members, holding an accredited Manitoba (or for Ontario) Food Handlers Certificate (*this certificate is easily attained by anyone taking the Food Handlers course*)
- Meetings are permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols
- Weddings are permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols
- Funerals and Burials are permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols
- Baptisms are not permitted until the protocol has been tested, perhaps by mid September
- Morning and Evening Prayer are permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols
- Home Communion are permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols for any person who cannot attend gatherings
 1. Reserved Sacrament – bread only
 2. The wafer should not to be touched by the ministrant of the sacrament. (*Perhaps present the wafer in a zip-lock bag*)
 3. Observe ALL of the regulations in hospitals and Senior's Care facilities

Eucharist is permitted following all diocesan and local public health protocols.

1. We celebrate the Great Thanksgiving in one species, bread, understanding that the full nature of Christ is received in our sharing (the common cup should not be shared at this time, until further notice)
 2. Celebrants must wear masks during the prayer of Great Thanks Giving and administration of sharing communion
 3. Wherever possible wafers should not have direct human contact other than that of the recipient of the sacrament. Some communities use muffin cups, or pharmaceutical dispensing cups which are prepared with wafers prior worship. Each community should consider what works best in their setting
- Many conflicting, non-peer reviewed studies concerning singing in a group are now present in social media. Diocesan guide-lines for singing are as follows:
 - Preferred delivery for gathered event music -*
 - 1. Musical groups, principal musician(s) (*organists, pianists, guitarists and vocal soloists*) can and should lead music observing physical distancing, and not singing toward other musicians
 - 2. Gathered people in some communities have employed the following to engage music: humming, clapping, using movement in a fixed location
 - 3. Singing at outdoor events is permissible as long as people do not sing toward one another and while observing physical distancing (congregational singing should not take place at indoor events at this time, until further notice)

July 25, 2020

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