

+ Re-opening of Kincardine United Church for In-Person Worship

Recommendations Prepared by the Council-designated Working Group

As of August 5, 2021, Grey-Bruce Public Health entered full Phase 3 re-opening and permitted all places of worship to open with attendance limited to permit physical distancing of 2 metres to ensure the safety of worshippers. Kincardine United Church Council authorized a working group to develop recommendations for re-opening our church which were specific to our Community of Faith. This Working Group consisted of Rod Coates, Gord Dunbar, Mary Phillips, Ralph Knowles, Judy Zarubick, with Liz Dillman as resource to the group. This group used information from the Province of Ontario, Grey-Bruce Public Health, as well as the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, to update its recommendations.

The following recommendations are the first stage of what will be a phased-in approach to return to in-person worship, leading to group events and external groups using the building. With the evolution of COVID-19 in our community, province and around the world, these recommendations and protocols will also need to change, be re-visited, and amended. This will protect not only our minister, but our staff, volunteers and congregation, with special thought always going to those most vulnerable.

Given its demographic reality, the health and safety of our congregation is of utmost importance. We are looking to open our doors to in-person worship and want to be sure that we take the time to open safely and correctly to be able to stay open. We know you are looking forward to worshipping together again in person and it is our desire that these recommendations will provide a way to do so safely. This will be a learning curve for all of us. It may feel uncomfortable or strange at times and it will not be what we were used to, but for the time being, it is our reality. It will take the work of all to be respectful of the recommendations to make worshipping in-person a success. We know each of you will do your part!

Please be safe and God Bless,

Your Re-opening Working Group

Please feel free to direct further questions, concerns, clarifications to Council President Rod Coates 519-396-7275 or rodcoates@tnt21.com

Recommendations approved by the Kincardine United Church Council will be subject to ongoing conversations with the minister, staff and congregation

The mandate: Church buildings may re-open provided physical distancing of 2 metres is in place and other protocols are followed. It is recommended that once in-person worship resumes that the Sunday worship service will be projected on all sanctuary monitors and live streaming will continue.

The Building:

- Hand sanitizer at all entrance doors
- Hand sanitizer in all washrooms
- Masks available at all entrance doors
- Signage posted at all entrance doors about masks required and listing public health questions to be satisfied.
- Worship is encouraged to be family friendly from beginning to end; families are encouraged to bring their own pew supplies for children.
- No nursery services will be offered at this time.
- Coffee and refreshments will not be provided until such time as protocols can be established.
- Open windows when able.

Face Coverings:

Grey-Bruce Public Health states that those who can wear a face covering will do so to protect their fellow worshippers.

It is important to note that there are individuals who cannot wear masks for health reasons, who require lip reading to communicate, or experience facial irritations wearing a mask. Individuals who are not capable of wearing a mask should not feel stigmatized or guilty for not doing so, but those unable to wear a mask will be provided with additional assistance to enable their participation from home.

Seating:

Grey-Bruce Public Health stipulates that worship may resume with 2-metre distancing. A seating plan will be developed to implement this requirement.

Greeters:

- Masked greeters will:
 - ensure hand sanitizer is used upon entry & exit and provide a mask if the attendee requires one.
 - ensure the attendee reads the screening questions and agrees their answers are all “No.”
 - Help ensure seating follows the seating plan.
 - Will provide elevator assistance. The Lift Operator will have antiseptic wipes to clean touch points as required.
- Seating will be completed front to back where/when possible. Exiting of the building will be completed back to front where/when possible.

Worship:

- Singing hymns is permitted if masks are worn.
- Sharing the Peace will be done without touching by remaining in place and observing physical distancing.
- Communion will take place using updated Programme Committee protocols.
- Sunday School will not be resuming at this phase of re-opening

Offering:

- Per past practice, offering plates will not be passed during the service. A plate will be placed at the entrance for those wishing to place their offering.
- Protocols for counting the offering are to be developed.

Facility Usage Other Than Worship:

- Church group usage of facility will now be booked by the Booking Facilitators and follow all Grey-Bruce Public Health protocols.
- Non-church group usage of facility will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Booking Facilitators and follow all Grey-Bruce Public Health protocols.
- Any external group booking the facility will need to provide their protocols for using the facility before being considered.

Sanitization:

- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of all areas of the facility, especially high touch surfaces.

Church Office

- The church office will have restricted access, as determined by staff.

Communication

- A separate email communication will be sent to the church email distribution list with details of this re-opening plan.
- The church website will have updates posted on what to expect for worship. Updates will also be posted in the weekly announcements.
- Entrances will be posted with COVID-19 screening questions & mask requirements. These details will also be included with the email communication.

Further Considerations

- Groups previously using the facility will be contacted to inform them of this re-opening plan.
- Any weddings or funerals occurring at Kincardine United Church will strictly adhere to the Grey Bruce Public Health protocols, and those of both the funeral home and Kincardine United Church.