

Questionnaire and Application for Re-opening a Parish Church to In-Person Gatherings

(APPROVED BY DIOCESE ON OCTOBER 7, 2020)

Introduction

St. John's Parish Council has continued prayerful discernment on the issue of re-opening our buildings since the Diocese entered Phase 2 in mid-June, and then Phase 3 in mid-August. We are applying now for a partial re-opening of our buildings under Phase 3.

In addition to diocesan and provincial guidelines, our discernment has been shaped by our Parish Values developed in Fall of 2019. One of these values is **"Our Parish is connected to our community and we demonstrate good works in this community."** As you know, Community Ventures Society (CVS) approached us in June about using our space for their programs. Parish Council decided that, while we were discerning about wider building usage, we would apply to open the Parish Hall to serve these vulnerable folks in our wider community. However, after we received diocesan approval for this application, due to some staffing shifts CVS has opted to hold off on expanding their programs into our building for the time being. We will resume conversation if/when the situation changes.

Another of our parish values is **"We strive to be a spirited and courageous family, valuing all people—laity and clergy—in their ministries."** Parish Council therefore put out a survey in July to the wider parish to solicit their feedback on reopening. The survey showed that at least 80% continued to feel "hesitant" to "very uncomfortable" to return to the building for worship in the foreseeable future. Parish Council took this data into consideration, as we discussed further the unique limitations of the size of our small physical space in relation to the large size of our congregation, as well as the number of people who would be available to do the necessary sanitation and other health and safety processes for larger gatherings.

As we considered other parish values such as **"Our Parish is home"** and our **"Valuing hospitality and the welcoming of new people into our community"**, all of these pointed to continuing to worship online for the time being, as it has enabled us to gather the most people together and also welcome visitors safely. Our two online Zoom worship services are serving well our needs as a parish (our ASA over both services during the pandemic has held steady at 90, which compares favourably to our 2019 in-person ASA of 93). We are aware that many in the parish are at high-risk for Covid-19 due to age, being immune-compromised, or other health conditions; others live with at-high-risk folks. In all these cases, a substantial number would not be able to attend in-person worship. We therefore have continued to discern that it does not make sense to open the building for worship at this time.

We do, however, wish to begin to reopen the buildings in a limited way, as it will expand our ministry that is possible in this pandemic time. Our application focuses on reopening in a way that would enable us to welcome back community user groups (such as 12-step programs), allow for smaller group activities, as well as have a limited reopening of our Parish Office to increase our capacity to support ministries within the parish and to the surrounding community. We feel this limited reopening would be the best balance

between not overly taxing our members with a full-scale reopening (many of these members are volunteering in re-envisioning formation and fundraising strategies, as well as ongoing capital and maintenance project planning), while still allowing us to stay open to what God may reveal to us in the coming months about “being Church” in new ways we may not have discerned yet.

Background

1. **Have you reviewed the following documents, and considered how this guidance may impact your plan to re-open to in-person worship and other gatherings?**
 - a. **“The Re-Opening of Churches in the Diocese of New Westminster” (the full document to which this questionnaire is attached) (the “Re-Opening Plan”)**
Yes_X___
 - b. **BC Centre for Disease Control’s COVID-19 guidance for Faith Organizations (link [here](#))**
Yes_X___

Parish Authorization and Approval

2. **Have the “Responsible Persons” of your Parish (as defined in the Canons of the Diocese) reviewed and approved your proposal to initiate this plan. (For incorporated parishes: Priest-in-Charge, Church Wardens, and Trustees; for non-incorporated Parishes, Priest-in-Charge and Church Wardens. In addition, it may be appropriate to consult with your parish’s Parish Council.)**

Yes_X___

Please list the names of the “Responsible Persons” who have reviewed and approved your plan.

The Rev. Vivian Lam

The Rev. Anne Anchor

Geri Grigg

Ruby Ng

Amalia McGlashan

Mary Kyle

Kristin Kuhn

Amanda Mungal

Brian McGlashan

Date for Re-opening

3. On which date are you applying to re-open?

10/20/2020

Preparing the Church Building for Re-entry

4. What (specifics) will you do to prepare the church building for re-entry at Phase II and wider use at Phase III? Who will do this work?

We will arrange for a deep-clean of the church before reopening, particularly the Parish Hall and Parish Ministry Centre (the building next door to the church which houses the Parish Offices). This deep-cleaning will be done by parish volunteers and/or outsourced to a janitorial company.

Before this deep-cleaning, parish volunteers will remove from common-use areas any loose items, such as paper signage, banners, bulletin boards, tablecloths, picture frames, and pamphlets.

The deep-cleaning will include a thorough cleaning and sanitizing of interior surfaces, particularly: windows, floors, carpets, tables/desks and chairs, benches/pews, room dividers, TVs and DVD players, copy machine/printer, computers, telephones, toilets and stalls, sinks, washroom and kitchen counters, soap and napkin dispensers, surfaces on kitchen appliances (fridge, freezer, microwave, stoves, dishwasher, kitchen trolleys), kitchen pull-down partition, shelves and outsides of cabinets, overhead fans, doorknobs, light switches, light fixtures, and stair railings.

We plan to have a weekly/biweekly clean of the building going forward, and will continue to monitor building usage to decide on any further deeper-cleaning beyond this weekly/biweekly clean.

We will stock basic PPE (e.g. masks and gloves) and cleaning supplies (e.g. paper towels, hand soap, sanitizer, cleaning fluids and sprays, etc.) for the use of all building users in accessible locations.

We will post signage re: precautions in social distancing and staying home when sick, and the final approved reopening plan. There will also be signage indicating that the building is currently only open on a limited basis, and that permission from the parish must be obtained for any one-time or ongoing group meetings.

Sunday Worship

[Note: Most of this section n/a to this application. Our Parish plans to continue with online worship only at this time.]

- 5. What is your Sunday worship plan for Phases II and III? What form(s) of worship and how many Sunday worship services do you intend to offer (in-person or online) for Phases II and III?**

We plan to continue with online worship for now: two Zoom Morning Prayer services at 8:30am and 10am. The 10am service has hymns led by our Music Director (and occasionally choir members) as well as a children's program (via Messenger Kids and/or Zoom) offered once a month.

- ~~6. How many people can your worship space or the space(s) where you intend to hold worship accommodate while complying with the requirements set out in the Re-Opening Plan, in households sitting two metres apart in all directions? (Must be no more than 50, including clergy or laity serving).~~
- ~~7. Will it be necessary to modify where you worship, the position of furniture in the worship space or the way the space is marked to assist those attending in maintaining social distancing? If so, how?~~
- ~~8. How will you undertake training with your Greeters and what will you train them to do?~~
- ~~9. What is your music plan for worship during Phases II and III?~~
- ~~10. How will you ensure cleanliness and sanitization in regard to the following items and spaces?~~
- ~~a. Worship leaflets/bulletins~~
 - ~~b. Prayer Books, Hymn Books (if used)~~
 - ~~c. Physical items such as pews, the altar, pulpit, lectern, kneelers, communion rail.~~
 - ~~d. Bathrooms~~
 - ~~e. Other common spaces or high-touch areas~~
- ~~11. How and who will you sanitize worship and other spaces between any worship services?~~

Other Forms of Worship or Prayer

12. What other forms of worship or prayer do you intend to offer in Phase II and III (weekday in-person worship or online worship)? How will you provide for physical distancing in any in-person weekday worship?

We plan to continue with just our Sunday online Zoom worship for now, with potential to expand to additional special online Zoom weekday services on occasion. During the pandemic we have begun a daily (Monday-Saturday) Noonday Psalms and Prayer meditation video that is posted on our Facebook page, which we plan to continue for the foreseeable future.

Office Building Use

13. What is your plan for those working in the Church Office during Phases II and III?

The Parish Office is located in the Parish Ministry Centre (PMC), the building next door to the church building. Our Parish Office (pre-pandemic) had two staff coming in regularly--an Office Administrator who worked part-time (position currently vacant) and a full-time Rector. Both have separate offices that are next to each other. We have a third adjacent office that is used for parish volunteers, most frequently for the Envelope Secretary, Bookkeeper and Treasurer, and for photocopying and printing by staff. We have a small Kitchen (4 x 4 ft) and a Meeting Room (8 x 10 ft) used for Council meetings and Education for Ministry (EfM).

When we closed the buildings, most of the activities transitioned to remote and will remain that way for the foreseeable future. The purpose of re-opening the Parish Office is to support some of the activities that cannot be done remotely. We will be recruiting a new Office Administrator who will be required to be on-site to attend to the mail and filing, interfacing with building maintenance contractors on occasion, and specifically for orientation. The Rector and Treasurer will continue to work mostly from home. The Envelope Secretary/Bookkeeper will continue to come onsite to process donations and cheques weekly, and the Wardens (and occasionally Treasurer and Rector) will continue to come in to sign cheques and check on the buildings as needed.

We will have the following precautions:

- The space has 3 separate and distinct offices (*each 8 x 8 ft*) that would allow safe workspaces for three people at one time.
 - Typical occupancy will be limited to one person at a time and the schedule will be set by an online calendar. (One exception: orientation for our new Office Administrator.)
 - Masks will be required and physical distancing will be observed when more than one person is present.

- Occupancy will be monitored to see if this plan meets the needs of the staff and volunteers who need access to the offices.
- High touch surfaces will be disinfected after each occupant. For example, the Office Administrator will disinfect door knobs, phones, and taps before they leave at the end of day.
- Disinfectant spray will be provided in the washroom to apply to the toilet handle and the taps after each use.
- Hand hygiene will be practiced by each occupant of the office. Soap and single use towels are already present in the kitchen and washroom areas.
- Windows will be opened, weather and season permitting, to increase air circulation.
- Contacts will be collected by the online calendar and kept for 30 days.
 - Staff will book in working time on the online calendar
 - All others will make appointments to come into office. Staff will put name and contact information in the online calendar and ask questions such as the following to assess risk:
 - *Do you have respiratory symptoms or a fever?*
 - *Have you been in contact with anyone with symptoms or who has tested positive for Covid-19?*
 - *Have you travelled outside Canada, returning within the last 14 days?*
 - *Has anyone in your household travelled outside Canada and returned within the last 14 days?*
- The questions above will also be used by staff to self-assess their ability to safely come into the office each day.
 - Following orientation of the new Office Administrator, working from home will be facilitated to ensure that they can maintain an income while in quarantine, or should the diocese revert back to a more restrictive opening phase.
- PMC will be cleaned weekly/biweekly by janitorial service.
- Any food or drinks will be brought in containers that can be discarded or taken home for washing. Plates and utensils will be brought from home (not reused at office)
- On the days the Office Administrator is working alone, a regular check-in will be arranged to ensure safety.

14. What is your plan for meetings of Parish Council and other parish working groups during Phases II and III?

All working groups, including Council, have transitioned to meeting remotely since closure of the buildings. We expect this to continue. On occasion, we expect situations to arise where work needs to be done by more than one person (such as preparing church mailings). At that time, a risk assessment and risk mitigation process will be

conducted using the most current data from BCCDC as well as other research, to ensure the safest environment possible.

Any groups requiring physical space will adhere to protocols for small groups as described in Question #19 below.

Fund-raising

15. What are you doing or will you be doing in Phases II and III to support financial giving to your operating fund or towards special needs?

The wardens sent the parish a letter early on in the pandemic to encourage continued giving in this time, and we have an ongoing reminder about giving in our weekly e-newsletter. In the past few months, we have implemented e-transfer capabilities and set up an online donation mechanism on our website. Parish Council is reviewing finances at each meeting with an eye to monitoring ongoing pledges and other giving. Our Stewardship Team is currently executing a virtual stewardship campaign (via e-newsletter, Zoom worship services, and an emailed pledge form) and they are continuing to brainstorm other possible virtual fundraising and fellowship activities. The ACW has come up with virtual versions of our regular in-person fundraising events such as our Christmas Bazaar. Our online Community Kitchen has begun soliciting online giving to different charities associated with seasonal and recipe themes.

Phase III ONLY

Phase III - Introducing in-person Holy Eucharist

[Note: This section n/a to this application. Our Parish plans to continue with online worship only at this time.]

16. What is your plan for introducing and managing Holy Eucharist (should you choose to do so in Phase III), paying particular attention to sanitization and physical distancing?

Phase III - User Groups and Rentals

17. What is your plan in Phase III for re-opening the building to any user groups?

The three 12-step groups who normally use our Parish Hall will be invited to resume meeting with mutually agreed-upon guidelines for social distancing and masks; sanitation protocols and expectations for the Parish Hall, Washrooms, and Kitchen; and an agreement to abide by recommendations for staying home when sick, bringing in/taking

out their own drinks, and with no serving of food or drink unless consulted with us and abiding by sanitary requirements. These guidelines will for the most part mirror the guidelines for our own church small groups (as described in Question #19). The 12 step groups have indicated that they will provide their own PPE and cleaning supplies, but the parish plans to also have additional supplies available if needed.

We will ask the 12 step group leaders to keep their own lists of attendees and their contact information for 30 days after each gathering, in order to aid in contact tracing; additionally we will ask them to encourage those who attend their meetings to reach out to public health (and to group leaders) if experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms before, during, or after meetings. We will also require group leaders to notify the parish promptly of any known cases of possible exposure in our buildings to aid in our own contact tracing and decisions around extra sanitization required.

If there are any new user groups that wish to use our space, they will also be required to adhere to similar guidelines as for the 12 step groups above.

18. What is your plan in Phase III for re-opening the building to rentals?

The Presbyterian congregation that rents our space on Sunday afternoons will be invited to meet again, and will be given, for reference, the diocesan guidelines for worship and fellowship at the current reopening stage, as well as the protocols that we as a parish have implemented for small group gatherings. We will also let them know that we are not currently open for worship ourselves. They will sign a liability waiver.

They are a very tiny congregation and to date have not expressed a desire to meet in the church building while we are currently closed; once we open up the building for small groups, we anticipate that they will begin using the space again. We will determine with them agreed-upon cleaning protocols (i.e. cleaning of all contact surfaces) for our Music Director who uses the keyboard in the sanctuary for our 10am Zoom service prior to their service, as well as for their congregation as they leave the sanctuary after their service.

Phase III - Formation, Fellowship and Pastoral Care

19. What is your plan for any in-person formation activities/offerings for adults?

Our current adult formation programs/activities – Bible Study, Prayer Group, Education for Ministry (EfM) etc. have all been carried out via Zoom during the pandemic. Most groups intend to continue meeting online at this time, but should any wish to move to in-person, they will be required to request permission of Parish Council to do so (Council may delegate this approval process to designated, trained individuals). Once a group has been approved to meet, they will pre-book their space usage through the Parish Office.

Any groups meeting at the church will agree to abide by the following protocols: staying home when sick, wearing of masks and social distancing, hand hygiene, no shared food/drink, no shared materials (e.g. books), minimization of toilet usage (with cleaning after each use), sanitizing of all touched surfaces at departure. Each group will also be required to keep a log of names and contact information for 30 days after each gathering, to aid in contact tracing.

The above protocols will apply to ongoing as well as one-time or occasional meetings of small groups.

20. What is your plan for any in-person formation activities/offerings for children or youth?

We currently have had children's activities (Sunday School, Children's Talk in worship, VBS) via Messenger Kids and Zoom and intend to continue with this online format for now. Should we move toward any in-person activities, the same protocols will apply as above, administered and enforced by the adults in charge of the children's or youth programming, with support from the young people's family members as applicable.

21. What is your plan for hosting in-person fellowship?

The main fellowship activity we have currently is Zoom Coffee Hour after both Sunday worship services, and we intend to continue online for now. Should we move toward any in-person fellowship activities, the same protocols will apply as above. Our Parish Hall has capacity for maximum 40 people (28 with current furniture configuration) with social distancing. If there is food/drink served, those distributing it will wear gloves, and no buffets or self-serve food will be allowed.

22. How will you be handling any in-person pastoral care in Phase III?

For now, pastoral care will continue to be done primarily via phone, text, email, and Zoom by clergy and the Parish Visiting Team. The Rector will consider in-person pastoral care on a case-by-case basis, and will follow safety and health protocols for small group meetings on parish premises (as detailed above) in those cases.

Funerals will be conducted if they can be done safely off-premises. Any other baptism, wedding, and funeral requests are being put on hold for now until the building reopens again for community worship. Pastoral care and contact will be provided virtually and in-person to the individuals and families in the interim as described above. If there is urgent pastoral need for the sacraments, the Rector will make arrangements with colleagues at other Anglican churches to officiate them at those sites, and consult with the Archbishop's office as needed.

Service and Outreach

- 23. What is your plan to support existing or re-open outreach programs in Phases II and III? Have you completed and submitted the appropriate material for approval to the Synod Office?**

Our community Food Bank has been on hiatus since the pandemic and we do not currently plan to resume the ministry at this time.

At this point, our Community Kitchen is operating in a virtual cooking lesson format. We are working towards upgrading the technology in our worship and community spaces to allow for cooking lessons where the host of the kitchen is able to prepare food in the church kitchen, using cameras and sound equipment that would allow for better broadcasting. The commercial janitorial service we use will ensure adequate cleaning for that purpose. In addition, we have a commercial dishwasher to sanitize utensils and equipment. All other protocols for small group meetings as described above would be followed.

Should we decide to change the format of the Community Kitchen, we have a member of our congregation who is a Certified Public Health Inspector and is a FoodSafe Instructor who has agreed to facilitate approval with Fraser Health and be a liaison with the Diocese for any necessary approvals.

- 24. For food ministry programs, have you completed and submitted the appropriate forms for approval to the Synod Office? (Please see here)**

[Not applicable at this time.]

Other

- 25. If someone who has attended in-person worship at your Parish contracts COVID-19, how will you communicate with your congregation and members who may have come into contact with that individual, while remembering privacy and pastoral care?**

At this stage, we would not have in-person worship, but we may have small groups meeting on our premises.

The Parish Office and parish small groups have contact tracing protocols as described above in Questions # 13 and 19. We will retain any contact information for 30 days in the event that we need to reach someone about potential exposure.

We will ask all user groups - parish groups and external groups - to alert us to any incident of COVID-19 on our premises, and Parish Council will oversee any contact tracing with the government that is necessary, keeping the wider parish informed.

A communication will go out to the parish that there has been a case of COVID-19 on our premises (without naming individuals), and that contact tracing is being implemented. If there are parishioners who may have been exposed to the virus, they will be notified immediately of the need to quarantine, watch for symptoms, get tested etc. Overall, we have an established weekly newsletter, announcements before service, and a phone tree, and all of these tools can also be used to get the word out to parishioners quickly as needed.

26. What practical support do you need from your Regional Archdeacon or from the Synod Office to help with the implementation of these plans?

At the moment we do not need additional assistance. If there is an issue that needs consultation, we will reach out to the Regional Archdeacon and/or Synod Office as necessary. Thank you!

[THIS APPLICATION WAS SIGNED BY ALL "RESPONSIBLE PERSONS" LISTED IN QUESTION #2]

[THIS DOCUMENT INCORPORATES SMALL REVISIONS TO THE ORIGINAL APPLICATION, WHICH WERE ASKED FOR BY THE DIOCESE ON 10/7/20 AND REFLECT UPDATES THROUGH 10/18/20]