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**ST. JACOBS  
MENNONITE  
CHURCH**

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1310 King St. N., Box 105  
St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0  
Tel. 519-664-2268  
Email: [church@sjmc.on.ca](mailto:church@sjmc.on.ca)

# **SJMC**

## **Reopening Process Outline**

**Draft Compiled by: SJMC Reopening Committee**

Sue Shantz  
Doug Shantz  
Chip Bender  
Kevin Derksen  
Pauline Martin

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## **Proposed Timeline for Reopening SJMC Building to Worship**

### **SJMC Reopening Committee**

### **July 2020**

The Reopening Committee suggests that we begin the process of reopening slowly and gradually rather than jumping into our maximum capacity and complexity right from the beginning. There are a few ways that we suggest a “soft start” could be accomplished:

1. Plan a first physical gathering in the building that is not on a Sunday morning. This would have the effect of reducing both the number of interested attendees and the “stakes” of the event. We might decide to limit attendance to well below our technical capacity threshold. But it would still allow us to try out the safety protocols (including the “registration” procedure) that we have been developing. We are suggesting a very simple weekday evening prayer service.
2. When we do begin to gather on Sunday mornings, we propose starting by simply projecting the usual pre-recorded service videos for the gathered group to watch together. We recognize the need to continue offering online access to our worship during this transition, to ensure that everyone in the community can continue to participate as they are able. Watching our service video during a Sunday morning gathering maintains the same access for everyone, and reduces the complexity of the gathering itself as we get used to the protocols.
3. As we roll the re-opening process out, we can transition into hybrid models of Sunday gatherings that include elements from the pre-recorded service, but also some live elements (i.e. worship leading and preaching). By the time we are ready for fully live and in-person services, we would expect to start either streaming or recording our worship gatherings to maintain online access for those unable to attend in-person. The logistics of this transition will require some significant work yet.
4. We will give ourselves space and freedom at the beginning to experiment with a gathering and then step back to evaluate and adjust before meeting in-person.

With these considerations in mind, here is one proposed timeline for how we could move safely and carefully back to in-person gatherings:

**Wednesday August 12** – Simple evening prayer service in the sanctuary

**Sunday August 23** – First worship gathering in the sanctuary, viewing the pre-recorded service video

**Sunday August 30** – Back to online worship for Wendy’s farewell

**Sunday September 6** – Long Weekend (Joint musical worship online with Breslau MC)

**Sunday September 13** – Worship in sanctuary with pre-recorded video or hybrid

We could continue into September and perhaps October with Sunday gatherings that are a hybrid of video and live elements. At some point we would stop pre-recording, and move to fully live services that are themselves recorded and made available in some way.

This timeline can of course be adjusted or pushed back as our comfort levels and readiness dictates.

## **Communication with the Congregation**

Following approval by Leadership Council of the Draft Reopening Timeline and Protocols it will be important to communicate the upcoming changes with the congregation.

We are recommending that the congregation be invited to complete a brief survey to gauge how comfortable they are to return to worship in the building. We can either put the survey link in the communication that goes out to the congregation after the Leadership Council meeting or it could go in the body of the letter/email if we want to give it more profile.

How much of the timeline/protocols do we put out? We would suggest that the first communication give a bit of a road map of what's to come, then closer to the August 12<sup>th</sup> evening a more detailed outline of what to expect when they arrive.

## **Proposed Church Reopening Guidelines SJMC Reopening Committee – July 2020**

### **Capacity:**

Seating capacity: We will calculate our normal capacity as 361 (7 per bench except handicapped rows count 6 plus back row) at 30 % capacity that equals 108 people

As it turns out if we use social distancing rules and every other bench we can comfortably seat 108 people plus pianist and pastors at front, ushers in foyer and sound people in booth

Chairs could be added on front north side and in foyer for approx. 10 additional.

Note that the pews are 68" apart not the recommended 78" (5'8" vs. 6'6" (2 meters)) but since people are face to back it minimizes the risk.

If we go to every third bench to get to the 2 meters our capacity drops to 80 people.

### **Attendance:**

We would ask people to pre-register by Thursday noon if they are going to attend. This will aid with follow up if needed and to know if we have reached maximum capacity. As well, we will know if singles, couples or families are attending. Members of social bubbles could also be flagged. This will aid in the seating plan. Registration will be sent to Pauline. We can also ask if the elevator is needed and if handicap spaces are needed. The 4 Covid questions can be asked if over the phone. If attendance is sent via email, Pauline will send the questions for a response.

A seating plan will be created by Pauline and sent to all registrants on email (if they have it) so they know ahead of time where they are sitting. Ushers would also have the list of registrants and where they are sitting. They will do a double check during the service to confirm who actually did attend as well as any not pre-registered but attended. The names on the completed list should include ushers, musicians, sound people and pastors so we have one summary of all who attended. This will be given to Pauline to file. The pews will be numbered. Initially we will not cordon off any pews because the seating plan will change from week to week depending on how many and who attends. If we have 80 people or less we will use every third pew. If more than 80 we will use every other pew with 2 people seated at the end of each bench.

**Volunteers:**

Volunteers (ushers, people working the tables and washrooms, sound, musicians etc.) will be asked to come by 9:15 so they can be checked and in place by 9:30. (The first week we may ask them to come earlier to do a run through). Closing and locking the church will be by volunteer as is currently done.

**Traffic Flow:**

The entrance doors will remain locked until all volunteers are in place, aiming to open to the public at 9:30.

A table will be set up just inside the double entrance doors, which will be our only entrance. On the table will be 2 sanitizers as well as directions to go either left or right and follow the lines on the floor. Also posted will be a welcome and reminder that if you have answered yes to any of the Covid questions please do not enter. There will also be masks but with a sign for people to supply their own. The arrow to the elevator will also be on this table. We will divide people by their seating. The two south sections going to the left and the 2 north sections going to the right. This table should be staffed by someone and still maintain the 6' distance. It is at this point where visitors will be greeted and asked the Covid questions and their contact info as well as having the mask discussion. They can then be sent through the line with the others and ushers can seat them in the appropriate spot.

We will mark the floors of the foyers in 2 meter spaces. Remove or move the tables to the side so there are no obstructions. Mark the aisles in the sanctuary in 2 meter spaces.

After people have cycled through the lower foyer they will go up the steps in 2 single file lines to 2 tables (one for each line) where they will be greeted by people asking if they answered yes to any of the Covid questions. This is as much to show due diligence on our part since if people have got that far they feel well enough to attend. Once they have passed this point they will wait for an usher to take them to their seats. We probably only need 3 ushers, one for each aisle since there will only be a max of 118 people. We will have sanitizer as well as offering plates on the 2 tables in the upper foyer for anyone who wants to deposit their offering.

Ushers will be for helping in people movement and should know where people will be sitting. Shortened benches would be first choice for larger groups in a social bubble to sit since they normally would only hold 2 people. Space will be allocated each week for visitors.

If any outer clothing is worn it should be taken to the pew.

**Exiting:**

Exiting after the service will be by row led by the ushers starting from the rear pews. They will continue to dismiss in such a manner that there will be no crossing or merging of lines as people exit. People will maintain the 2 meter distance and file out, down the steps and out through the lower foyer through the same side they entered. We expect any visiting will be in the parking lot.

**Washrooms:**

The men's and ladies main washrooms as well as the handicapped washroom on the main foyer level will be available. A volunteer will be there to ensure one person at a time uses the wash room and sanitizing after each usage.

For the men's and ladies W/R the volunteer will sit at the top of the steps. For the upper foyer w/r the person will stand just outside the washroom.

**Access to the building:**

Access will be limited to the lower and upper foyers and sanctuary. Also, the 3 washrooms and for those that need it, the elevator, through the 2 main doors.

Upper floor, office wing and basement will be off limits. Nursery will initially be closed. Those areas should be marked as closed.

**Sound:**

Sound people require protocols. Sanitizer will be available just outside the door to the sound booth. Sound people should have all mics adjusted prior to seating to minimize back and forth through the auditorium. The sound people will be the only ones touching the mics. No more than 2 people allowed in the booth and social distancing needs to be maintained. If needed, a barrier can be constructed between the 2 technicians. If it is necessary for the furthest person in the booth to leave, they can squeeze by the other person by each turning their backs to the other. Signs will be posted that the sound booth is off limits to people other than sound technicians. Any items such as USB sticks brought in should be wiped down. Any garbage created should be disposed of in the garbage can. Any instructions for a worship service should be emailed to the sound booth computer. Each person participating in the service will have their own mic and will not share mics.

**General:**

A memo will be sent to the congregation indicating what they can expect when attending, as well as noting the pre- registration process

Prior to the service we assume music will be playing starting at 9:30. Could we have announcements and other things running on the screens also?

Opening the upper part of the windows can facilitate ventilation.

The entrance doors to the church and the auditorium will remain open as much as possible to avoid touch points.

We assume people will be responsible in the parking lot.

There will be no Sunday school for the children.

No sharing time or worship response time.

No paper mail.

Once we begin meetings we will likely increase the cleaning to include the sanctuary but our assumption is that by allowing at least 48 hours between usages of the sanctuary or any rooms, the germs have died.

**July 28, 2020**

**To: The Congregation**

**From: Re -opening Committee on behalf of Leadership Council**

**Re: Opening SJMC Building to Worship**

In mid June the provincial government announced that Ontario would be moving into Phase 2, which permitted churches to open with the limit of no more than 30 per cent of the building capacity along with the appropriate safety measures in place.

We were encouraged by MCEC (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada) to give careful consideration to what needed to be in place before we return to worshipping in our building.

After discussion at Leadership Council a Reopening Committee was formed to prepare a timeline for reopening, along with protocols and procedures that would need to be in place.

Those proposals were approved at Leadership Council last week and we would like to give an overview of what reopening might look like. Our intent is to begin slowly and gradually, allowing us time to adjust to and become familiar with the protocols that need to be in place.

**A Timeline** to move safely and carefully back to in-person gatherings.

Wednesday, August 12 – A simple evening service of recorded music, prayer and reflection. Following the service there will be a time of physically distancing fellowship out on the lawn, weather permitting.

Sunday, August 23 – first worship service in the sanctuary, viewing the pre-recorded video, fellowship opportunity outdoors following the service, weather permitting.

Sunday, August 30 – Online worship service, farewell for Wendy.

Sunday, September 6 – Long weekend (joint online musical worship service with Breslau MC).

Sunday, September 13 – Worship in the Sanctuary with a possible combination of the pre-recorded service and some live worship elements.

Moving forward, the online services will continue for viewing either at home or in the Sanctuary. When we're able to move into full in person services we will switch to live streaming the service for those at home. With the uncertainty of how the pandemic will continue to unfold we will evaluate and adjust the services as needed.

**Safety Guidelines & Protocols** – we are all aware that Covid-19 has brought tremendous changes into all aspects of our lives. Gathering together again for worship will require an adjustment for all of us as we adapt to following the guidelines that are there to keep all of us safe! At first, it may feel strange and unsettling but God is present with us in whatever circumstances we gather together to worship. Let's be thoughtful, patient and kind with each other. See safety guidelines in a separate attachment.

We recognize that not everyone will feel comfortable returning at this time. We encourage you to complete a brief questionnaire that will help us gauge how comfortable you are in returning to worship in the building. Please respond by Tuesday, August 4.

**Note: The link/questionnaire that went out to congregation for this document has been included on the next page.**

May the God of hope and peace continue to guide us in our planning and preparations.

The Re-opening Committee welcomes any questions or comments.

Sue Shantz, Chair, Chip Bender, Pauline Martin, Doug Shantz, Kevin Derksen

## SJMC Return to Building Questionnaire

As Ontario moves into later phases of pandemic recovery, we are preparing for a gradual return to gatherings in our building. This will happen slowly beginning at the end of the summer and moving into the fall. Many new protocols and procedures will be in place to keep people safe and comply with public health directives. As part of this process, Leadership Council is looking for feedback on how people are feeling about a return. Please respond to the brief questions below. Since we would like these returned by August 4 we encourage those that receive this mail to call in to the church with your response, or have a friend fill out the survey electronically on your behalf.

1. Assuming that all the recommended protocols and procedures are in place, which of the following best describes your feelings about returning to worship in our building?

- ☐ I will be there at the first opportunity.
- ☐ I plan to return whenever possible, but with concern that sufficient precautions are taken.
- ☐ I will likely wait some additional weeks/months before coming to the church.
- ☐ It may be quite a while before I am comfortable returning.
- ☐ Not sure.

2. Please identify any particular concerns, questions or suggestions you would like to pass along.

3. Name (optional)

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4. Household Configuration

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Couple
- ☐ Three or more
- ☐ Family with children



## **ST. JACOBS MENNONITE CHURCH COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

We want to ensure that everyone remains safe and healthy and that we are following the Public Health guidelines. Please read the following information carefully.

1. Our 30 % seating capacity is 108 people plus volunteers and persons involved in worship.
2. You will be required to call the church office by Thursday noon to indicate that you will be attending the Sunday service.
3. Upon your arrival you will be asked the Covid-19 screening questions. Please stay at home if you are feeling unwell. If you test positive for the virus within 2 weeks you are obligated to contact the SJMC office.
4. Physical distancing must be practiced at all times. Volunteers will be available to assist with your entering and leaving and arranging and recording where you are sitting.
5. Masks are mandatory, unless you cannot wear one for health reasons.
6. Hand sanitizers will be placed in the appropriate areas.
7. The men's and women's main washrooms and the handicapped washroom on the main foyer will be available.
8. Access to the building will be limited to the lower and upper foyers and the sanctuary, and to the elevator as needed.
9. Take any coats and personal items with you to your seat.
10. There will be no sharing time in the service, no children's Sunday school or worship response time. Offering plates will be placed in the entry to the sanctuary. No paper mail or bulletins.
11. Please allow extra time for your arrival and entry into the sanctuary.
12. Following the worship service you are welcome to visit with each other, 2 metres apart, outside in the parking lot or grassy area.

Thank you for adhering to these guidelines and helping us all stay safe!