

FALL RE-OPENING INTRODUCTION

Church Ministries Council's
Pandemic Response Group
Waterloo North Mennonite Church
September, 2021

The Guidelines are intended to provide as safe as possible environment (a low risk COVID-19 transmission) inside the church building.

This living document may need to be amended depending on the pandemic conditions and new insights learned.

1. Committees, CMC, and MT will use these guidelines to plan their fall activities. More than likely, there will be a gradual re-opening of in-person gatherings, beginning September 12, and this may include hybrid options (both in person and virtual).
2. The Pandemic Response Group is Wes D., Gordon A., Kendra WE., Carmen B., Karen CA., Ron F., Reuben JM., Daniel K., and Rebecca G.
3. The number of people attending worship services will be limited by provincial guidelines and will vary depending on size of household groups. See details in the 2021 WNMC guidelines. Ministry Team will oversee the process of attending a worship service.
4. Other groups can use the church following the stated guidelines, this includes rentals.
5. All in-person gatherings must be RESERVED with the church office to avoid double-booking and allowing suitable time (one-hour time gaps for air exchange in building spaces).

Notable updates:

- Singing is allowed with properly worn masks. N-95 masks will be available for protection for those who are uncomfortable with the singing.
- Following provincial guidelines, the number of attendees is limited by the ability of household units to be physically distanced. That number depends on the area of the church being used. Estimates are in the guidelines. Bottleneck areas, such as the foyer, should not be used for visiting.
- The vulnerable, the unvaccinated and others at greater risk of infection are encouraged to participate virtually in services and other activities. We want to keep the risk of infection low.

Health and Safety Procedures During COVID-19 Pandemic: In-Person Gatherings Waterloo North Mennonite Church

Introduction/**Intention**

Waterloo North Mennonite Church (WNMC) is a Christian community. Our practice of faith includes gathering to worship, to be in fellowship, to support one another, for Christian education and other communal activities. In-person gatherings are currently curtailed for health reasons during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As prudent compliance with public health and government guidelines allows, we want to gather again, if we can safely do so.

The intent of these Guidelines is to allow for in-person gatherings of people at the WNMC building while mitigating the risk of COVID-19 infection.

This plan for reopening will be in place for the foreseeable future and will be revised as needed in response to applicable public health and government guidelines.

Note: While these mitigation measures follow publicly recommended procedures, the risk of infection cannot be completely eliminated for any in-person gathering at the WNMC building.

Guidelines

Permitted and not permitted uses for in-person gatherings

- A. Church activities are permitted within the conditions set by the regional and provincial governments' guidelines. The current restriction limits number of people to the ability to maintain two metre distance between household groups and masks must be always worn, except while speaking on camera during a church service. **Singing is allowed if a properly worn mask is used.** Windows must be open and exhaust fans on.
- i. **Because of the threat from the Delta variant, we discourage unvaccinated people and people more vulnerable to infection from attending indoor, in-person gatherings, including worship service, until further notice.**
 - ii. **Church-aligned group requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.** Such groups could include Mennonite conference or institution groups or others that align with WNMC's values and ministries.
 - iii. **Private Rentals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.** Application may be made to the WNMC Pandemic Response Group.
 - iv. **Space Availability Estimates** – At present the availability of spaces for in-person gatherings is as follows:

Building Space (Indoor rooms)	Currently Available?	Maximum Capacity	Additional Comments
Sanctuary	Yes	60-80 people	Depends on number in household groups.
Fellowship Hall	Yes	30-40 people	Same as above.
Kitchen	Yes	3 people	Max. 1 person by stove, dishwasher, serving area
Basement	Yes	20-30 people	Main area only
Library	Yes	One	May access 1 at a time
Lobby	No	--	No standing to visit.
Washrooms	Yes	One at a time	
Classrooms	Yes	10	
Conference room	Yes	5	Meetings should be held in angel loft
Portables	Yes	10 people	Discuss with Pandemic Group
Outside	Yes	No limit	Wear masks if distancing is not maintained.

Conditions for conducting in-person gatherings

- i. **All group activities inside or outside on church property must follow provincial and regional guidelines.** Please adhere to the 2-metre separation rule between household units. Indoors, mask must be worn at all times, except while on camera. Masks must be worn outdoors if 2-metre distancing cannot be maintained.
- ii. **All uses must be reserved ahead of time with the church office.** This is to avoid having multiple-groups overlapping.
- iii. **Only one group will meet in the church building at a time.** This includes small groups of under 10. An exception may be made twice a month on Wednesdays for the comforter knotters and Senior Connections groups, if they choose to use church building. Note that WNMC staff may be present in their own work areas at the same time as the in-person group is.
- iv. **The maximum of people present depends on the ability to keep a 2-metre distance between household units.** A "Household unit" is people who live together and does not include other households who participate in a "bubble". Note the limit includes those who are leading in worship and/or in the same building space but does not include staff in their own work areas.
- v. **One hour should separate all inside group events using the same area (including washrooms).** This is to allow time for fresh air exchange. The areas are: sanctuary, fellowship hall/kitchen/classrooms, portable, offices/conference room, and basement.
- vi. **All attendees must self-screen prior to entering the building and/or joining the in-person gathering.** See screening questionnaire below. It is preferred that this occurs at home before coming to WNMC's property.
- vii. **Attendance for contact tracing purposes must be recorded and provided to the church office.** This must include all attendee's names and contact information, which will only be used for contact tracing purposes if needed (i.e., an attendee later finds out they have previously been exposed and/or contracted COVID-19).
- viii. **Each group must have a designated safety representative ("Monitor") who will ensure that these safety guidelines are implemented.** Specifically:
 - The monitor should be someone other than the primary leader of the activity
 - The monitor will admit attendees to the activity, one person or household unit at a time, verifying that everyone has completed self-screening prior to entry
 - The monitor will ensure that the contact tracing attendance record is complete for every attendee and submitted to the church office.
 - The monitor will observe attendees during the in-person gathering and take immediate corrective action if any deficiencies are observed (e.g., improper face mask use, entering off-limit areas, etc.)
 - The monitor will ensure that post-activity sanitizing of used spaces is completed at the end of the in-person gathering.

Self-screening questionnaire

This is required prior to joining in-person gatherings inside or outside of the church building.

July 13, 2021

- A. Are you fully vaccinated (two weeks past second dose)? If no, go to questions in section B.
- B. If yes, review next two statements.
1. If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or waiting for test results for COVID-19, then please wait two weeks before attending an inside gathering at the church.
 2. If you are not feeling well, then avoid an inside gathering at the church until you are well.
- B. If you are not fully vaccinated, please answer these questions for yourself before entering the building, and if possible, at home before travelling to the church property. If you respond “Yes” to any of the following questions please do not join the in-person gathering or enter the building, but rather return home:
- i. Do you currently have COVID-19 (i.e., have had a positive test result that has not yet been resolved via two negative results over a 2-week period)?
 - ii. Are you currently experiencing severe difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, feeling confused or unsure of where you are, or losing consciousness
[IF SO CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY]
 - iii. Do you have a fever (above 37.8°C/100°F and/or feeling hot to the touch)?
 - iv. Do you have any flu-like symptoms (e.g., chills, new or worsening coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, runny nose not related to allergies, and general muscle aches)?
 - v. Have you recently lost or have diminished sense of taste or smell?
 - vi. Are you feeling ill or unusually fatigued?
 - vii. Do you have an unusual/long-lasting headache, digestive issues such as nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/stomach pain, pink eye (conjunctivitis) or are falling down often?
 - viii. In the past two weeks have you been in close contact, with someone who tested positive to COVID-19 which has not yet been declared resolved by a medical professional?
 - ix. Have you travelled or been in close physical contact with someone who has returned from another country, in the last two weeks?

Required Physical Distancing and Virus Exposure Control Measures
(all attendees must follow these procedures)

The main risk mitigation procedures are wearing face coverings (masks) and maintaining physical distance of at least 2 metres between people of different households.

- i. Only one household at a time may enter and sign contact tracing list.
- ii. Everyone must use hand sanitizer (provided) when entering the building.
- iii. Face masks must be worn properly (covering mouth and nose) at all times indoors, except while on camera or due to a medical condition or disability preventing face mask use (as designated by the Province of Ontario). Outdoors, properly worn face masks must be worn when 2-metre distance cannot be maintained.
- iv. Please read and follow all information signs posted, including the arrows taped on the floor to direct pedestrian traffic flow and help maintain appropriate physical distancing.
- v. Please adhere to the 2-metre distancing rule between household units.
- vi. Washroom use:
 - o Please leave the main washroom doors open at all times to avoid needing to touch door handles.
 - o Please call in before entering to make sure no one else is in the washroom (maximum capacity is one person at a time)
 - o Before leaving the washroom and after washing your hands thoroughly with soap, please use the provided wipes to sanitise all surfaces you touched and then dispose of the wipe directly into the garbage.

Procedures for Event Coordinators [MONITOR]

Depending on the location of the in-person gathering (space used), please adhere to the following requirements:

- **Worship in Sanctuary:**
 - Arrange chairs for safe distancing, adjusted for each Sunday's group.
 - Lay out aisle spaces that are a minimum 2 metres wide.
 - Ensure that doors into the sanctuary remain open to avoid attendees needing to touch door handles. To start, the sliding partition walls at the back of the Sanctuary will be kept open.
 - Turn on the fresh air intake and open windows for air circulation if possible. For the Sanctuary this means turning the two thermostat fan modes to "ON" and enabling the fresh air timers in the sound system closet. At the end of the gathering set the two thermostats back to "AUTO".
 - Inform attendees that no in-person singing (or talking in an overly-projecting manner) is permitted at this time.
 - For large events, ensure that ushers will be present to act as monitors, one by the entrance and one monitoring inside.
- **Gatherings in Fellowship Hall:**
 - Arrange activity seating to maintain 2-metre separation between participants (household units may sit with each other)
 - Ensure that walking spaces remain at least 2 metres wide
 - Turn on the fresh air intake for air circulation. For the Fellowship Hall this means enabling both fresh air timers and leaving the thermostat fans in "AUTO" mode.
- If weather permits, open windows screens during use of any space for air circulation.
- Do not use extra fans at floor or table heights. This can promote suspended aerosol circulation between attendees.
- Any interior doors needed to access the space used for your gathering should be propped open for the duration of the gathering (e.g., bathroom, fellowship/worship space doors).
- Leave doors shut to rooms not needed for your gathering (e.g., kitchen, classrooms).

Sanitising Spaces at the Completion of In-Person Gatherings

The designated Monitor is responsible to ensure the sanitization procedure is completed by the time all attendees of the in-person gathering have exited the building, allowing no re-entry to spaces once sanitised.

The goal of sanitising is to destroy any residual virus particles that may be present on surfaces using a suitable disinfectant¹. This is not intended to replace normal cleaning of the facility by our custodian.

- If the piano was used, the Pianist should sanitise the surfaces used (i.e., piano keys, music holder, bench)
- If any A/V equipment was used, the A/V Technician should sanitise the equipment (e.g., microphones, sound control equipment/computer, switches and handles in the A/V booth including the door handle)
- The event Monitor or other designated person(s) should sanitise surfaces in spaces that were used during the event. Particular attention should be given to:
 - Door handles (all surfaces back and front)
 - Chairs, tables, and other hard surfaces used (e.g., pulpit)
 - Other contact surfaces or equipment in rooms that were entered (e.g., kitchen counter & appliances, children's slide, hymnal cart, displays tables used, etc.)
 - Washroom surfaces:
 - Faucet and toilet/urinal handles
 - Counter tops
 - Paper towel dispensers
 - Note that floors do not normally need to be wiped down
- *Note that staff are responsible for sanitising their own office doors and work areas*

General disinfecting process to be used:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
2. Use disinfecting wipes // disinfecting spray and paper towel (supplies available by office sink) to wipe down surfaces that might have been touched or near where attendees spent time and could have had suspended aerosols/droplets settle on the surfaces.
3. Dispose of used wipes in the garbage. Do no re-use.
4. Note that if a disinfecting wipe has dried out it is no longer effective. If so, discard and get a replacement to continue.
5. Exit the building avoiding re-contacting cleaned surfaces.

¹ The method described is in general accordance with Public Health Ontario guidelines, e.g., <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>, and may be updated over time