

# The Territory of the People Anglican Church

Email: [office@territory.anglican.ca](mailto:office@territory.anglican.ca)  
Email: [finance@territory.anglican.ca](mailto:finance@territory.anglican.ca)  
Web: [territoryofthepeople.ca](http://territoryofthepeople.ca)



360 Nicola Street  
Kamloops BC V2C 2P5  
Ph: (778) 471-5573  
Fax: (778) 471-5586

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To All Parishes, Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Territory,

On June 30, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Dr. Bonnie Henry, set out the latest health order related to worship in British Columbia, which has now come into effect. It was very short and very clear:

**There are no capacity limits or restrictions on indoor or outdoor religious gatherings and worship services.**

This means that we have reached the end of the Provincial Health Officer's restrictions placed on worship services and liturgies.

While some are excited to be back for onsite worship, others may have concerns about onsite worship and being close to others. It may take some parishes time to get comfortable.

The re-entry to onsite worship will look different for each parish. We encourage clergy to meet with Wardens and/or parish council to discuss and discern what realistically can be offered with an encouragement to consider potential clergy burnout as parishes begin onsite worship while possibly continuing to offer virtual worship.

**With this in mind, here are some things to consider:**

1. It is encouraged that masks be worn when entering and leaving the church with a consideration of having them on during the liturgy.
2. Greeters are asked to wear masks.
3. Those speaking or leading singing can remove their mask for this role.
4. We are encouraged to keep a safe distance from one another (unless from the same household) to help build confidence for those hesitant about in-person worship and to continue to keep one another safe as BC begins to open up.
5. Before receiving Communion, individuals are encouraged to sanitize their hands.
6. A choir leading music in worship is okay.
7. Congregational singing is permitted; we encourage the wearing of a mask while singing.
8. It is no longer necessary to pre-register or collect contact tracing information for those attending worship. We recommend parishes consider maintaining a contact-tracing log (including names and phone numbers) for all who attend worship or other parish gatherings.
9. Washrooms no longer need to be designated "for emergency only."
10. We encourage having sanitizer and masks available in the worship space.

11. Social times before or after worship are permitted; however, please ensure those handling food/beverages have sanitized their hands and/or are wearing gloves. Where physical distancing is not possible in food service, we encourage those serving to wear a mask.

### **Communion, the Peace, and Offertory plates**

We encourage the following:

- Communion is in one kind only (except for the priest), the bread/body of Christ. The cup/wine/blood of Christ will not be offered to anyone other than the presider at this time.
- When distributing Communion, clergy are encouraged to wear a mask.
- At the time of exchanging the Peace of Christ, we encourage nodding or bowing to one another, limiting physical contact except between members of the same household.
- At this time, please do not pass Offertory Plates. Offertory plates can be placed at the door and can be brought forward when the offering is received.

### **Children & Youth Programming**

In-person Sunday School and Youth Groups can resume. It will be important to create a COVID awareness plan for these gatherings and to ensure the comfort and safety of the leaders and families. We recommend parishes consider spending the summer planning for a fall re-start of Sunday School and Youth Groups.

### **Cleaning**

Before expanding the broader use of church buildings, we encourage parishes to look at the sanitization of the church building with particular attention to areas of the building that will now be open to in-person gatherings. It is essential to pay special attention to high-touch areas, including pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, stair railings, and microphones. Parish leadership and/or parish councils are invited to have this conversation.

### **Hybrid Model**

As parishes begin to offer in-person worship, we encourage a hybrid model with virtual streaming of the service where possible, depending on the needs of the people in your parish.

All of this brings an enormous change in a very short time for all of us. While some are very eager to get back to “normal,” others in our parishes are hesitant. We encourage parish leadership to be aware of both views (and those in between) and be as pastoral and helpful as possible.

Some parishes may be ready to move back into onsite worship with few restrictions in place. Others will take more time. In consultation with your parish, set the appropriate timeline for returning to onsite worship and decide what that will look like.

For example: Based on the size of your building, you may decide to set a maximum number of people/households at the service to allow for social distancing. You may decide that pre-registration at this time is helpful. You may wish to request that masks are worn inside the building at all times. Some parishes may not feel a need to have any of those practices in place. Conversations between clergy, staff, wardens, and parish council are important to make the best moving forward plan.

We thank the Diocese of Kootenay and the Diocese of New Westminster for their work on their re-opening plans and their willingness to share their documents with us.

If your parish needs support in developing a safe way to re-open the building or the offering of worship, please call the Territory office and speak with Rev. Len Fraser or Melissa Green.

Blessings,

*Interim Steering Committee:*

Bishop Barbara Andrews

The Rev. Len Fraser

Ms. Melissa Green

The Rev. Jo Ann Hinter

Bishop Gordon Light

The Rev. Barbara Liotskos

Archbishop Lynne McNaughton

Pastoral Elder Ernie Michell (*in training*)

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell

The Rev. Angus Muir