



CENTRAL SAANICH UNITED CHURCH

7180 East Saanich Road,
Saanichton, BC V8M 1Y4
Office telephone number: (250) 652-2713
Office Email: officecsuc@shaw.ca
Website: www.centralsaanichunited.ca

September 22, 2021

To all of our members: Update on COVID-19 Protocols

Central Saanich United Church Council Executive met for an extraordinary meeting on Sept. 17 to which we also invited Helen Wright as the chair of Worship and Donna Cameron as a representative of the Pastoral Care committee. Our full Council then met on Sept. 21 again in part to discuss the COVID-19 protocols put out by the Public Health Office and the Regional Office.

We discussed various aspects of the COVID 19 situation on Vancouver Island where there are now 309 active cases in the South Island region and this number is rising daily. The situation with COVID-19 is very fluid and we are trying to respond quickly to the changing protocols and suggestions put forward by the Regional Office.

The Exec Council members present participated in a very dynamic discussion and, through consensus of most of the participants, we have agreed on the following protocols. To maintain flexibility in responding to this situation, these protocols were not voted on but arrived at through discussion.

We realize and confirm that everyone must make their own decision on whether or not to attend Sunday worship services or any other function at the church. Everyone must find their own comfort level for attending or not attending church. We hope some of the protocols will help in that very personal decision.

Firstly, we agreed that our primary goal for these protocols is to keep our members as safe from COVID-19 as possible while attending worship services. To provide an alternate form of worship, our worship services will continue to be livestreamed so long as the numbers logging in and watching the service warrant it. Livestreaming the service will give people the opportunity to watch and participate in the service in the safety of their own home.

However, everyone who is personally attending church for worship will be required to wear a mask at all times. There are 4 exceptions: the choir who can sing the anthem without masks but standing on the stage and well away from the congregation, Rev. Bob can preside and present without his mask, the scripture reader when reading, and Amy when singing. For now, the congregation may sing hymns but they must continue to wear their masks.

Starting this week, each person arriving will be asked about their vaccination status. We will continue to allow unvaccinated people to attend but we must know who they are. This information will be collected only once and recorded so we do not need to ask each week. We will collect contact information for anyone who is not currently on our contact list, in addition to vaccination status. We will NOT require proof of vaccination status, just what people tell us.

All adults who are unvaccinated or who decline to declare their vaccination status will be seated in the front row(s) on the south side of the church, at a safe distance and facing away from the congregation, minister, choir or Amy. A mask is still mandatory for everyone and will be supplied if needed. Hand sanitation will also continue to be available.

Unvaccinated children will sit with their parents.

Fellowship time following service will be outdoors. We suggest that people bring their own beverage and snack in their own container if desired but none will be provided. People can mix and chat while appropriately distanced. Because this activity is outside, masking is not mandatory at this point.

All other church related activities (ex. Centering Prayer, contemplative disciplines, Bible studies, educational programs, choir rehearsals and performances) will require participants to be fully vaccinated.

Our AGM: On Sept. 26, our worship service will be followed immediately by our AGM. **The AGM is a business meeting – not a worship service - so everyone attending must be fully vaccinated and wear a mask at all times for the meeting.** Again, we will NOT be asking for proof of vaccination as we hope attendees will self-identify appropriately.

We hope to keep these protocols as current and as easy as possible to follow for all who wish to attend worship service on Sunday. Any changes will be sent to all of you.

Thank you all for your continued support and understanding in this time of change. And as Dr. Henry reminds us, Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe.

Regards,

Lissa Zala – Chair of Council

Rev. Bob Gilbert - Minister