Dear Willoughby Church

Council has re-appointed a new Covid Advisory Team and mandated it to wrestle with how best to create the safest place possible for all people to worship and be in ministry together. During this ongoing pandemic we are committed to following the best practices laid out by our health officials as they apply to the life of Willoughby Church. We see this as being hospitable to those who are vulnerable and otherwise would not feel comfortable in coming to church. We also see this as a way of showing care and concern for our neighbours and broader community.

We want to encourage all our members and regular attenders to be more aware of the needs and health of others, rather than simply focusing on the rights we have as individuals. We recognize that there is much division in our country, our region, and even in our church over how to best handle the COVID crisis. Jesus calls us to love one another and that is difficult to do when we are divided.  John 15:12 teaches:  "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." Do to others as you would have them do to you.

As a team, we are also guided by these words: Colossians 3: 12-14: "Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderheartedness, mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowances for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."

The Covid Team and Council will continue to re-evaluate these best practices every month as the situation changes.

Based on these guiding principles, below you will find a summary of the general guidelines we ask those who attend Willoughby Church to follow:

*The guidelines for our Sunday services are:*

* For all ages kindergarten and older to wear masks when you are inside the church building. The exception to the guideline is that masks can be removed during the sermon and while actively eating or drinking, such as in the Fellowship Hall and for those participating in leading the worship service.
* We ask that you stay home if you are not feeling well or sick.
* Continue the practice of washing hands frequently.
* As you find your seat, we ask that you keep physical distancing in mind where possible, spacing ourselves out the best we can throughout the whole sanctuary.
* We ask that you keep your greetings contact free.
* Prepackaged communion items will be available for those uncomfortable with taking elements from the servers.

 *Guidelines for general building activities are:*

* All staff and visitors are required to wear masks in all common areas unless meeting in individual office spaces and then only by agreement of all parties involved.

Over the upcoming week the full Covid Advisory Team Mandate as well as Guidelines for Low-Risk Worship Services will also be published on the church website.

From Council and the Covid Advisory Team