

What's Happening at St James United Church

July 2020

Please note: Any **decisions** will not be made until Rev. Maya Douglas has had a chance for input/review/approval

Dear Friends,

We hope you are well, keeping safe, and staying cool. This is an update as to what is happening, and what **might** be happening in our church building from September onwards. There is a Transition Team working on the logistics of reopening the building to staff, renters and for our own worship and other activities. We are following City, Provincial, Federal, and United Church guidelines to maximize all health concerns.

The safety of staff, volunteers, church members, and all those we serve must be paramount.

The following safeguards MUST be observed **from now** until further notice if you visit the church for **any** reason:

- **Do NOT attend if you are feeling unwell or feverish in any way!**
- **Every person shall wear a mask upon entering the building**
- **Hand sanitizer** is widely available, and on entry/exit
- **Sign in and out** (we need to maintain a 'contact list' in case someone develops the virus later, especially now, if individuals are entering the church during the summer for any reason). **There is currently a clipboard just inside the doors from the parking lot, hanging up on the left side (and ramp doors).**
- **Greetings:** 'Shalom' or 'Namaste' gestures- no handshaking, hugs etc. Words of greeting at 2m distance.

- **Washrooms** will be open for emergencies only: Washrooms will be cleaned thoroughly before and after each event/service, hands must be washed thoroughly with soap and water before and after using washroom. (It is anticipated that most services will last less than one hour, to begin with.)
- **All surfaces** have been, and will continue to be, cleansed thoroughly according to Health Department regulations
- **Music** will continue instrumentally, and by solos, either digitally or 'live'. There will be **no hymn singing** or full choir, likely until 2021. (Medical experts class singing as the most efficient way to spread droplets/contagion!)
- **Offering plates** will be available for cash envelopes or cheques in the Narthex, and at the front of the sanctuary. (The offering plates will not be 'passed'.)
- **The Kitchen** will remain closed until further notice. You are all encouraged to bring your own water/beverage - in a reusable container. There will be no Seniors' lunch, hospitality, etc. until it is deemed safe to reopen the kitchen.

At present, some churches are opening for worship at 30% of their capacity. St. James has capacity for 250 in the sanctuary, and 75 more in the balcony, so in theory, that could work for us (97 people maximum would equal that 30% capacity), with the above limitations, and maintaining physical distancing in the pews.

During the Lockdown, we have enjoyed some of the best **on-line services** available, thanks to the many technical talents of Rod Lord, Don and

Karen Munday, Gord Burrell, J-C Coolen and others. While it is hoped we will be able to continue to offer an on-line presence in the future, the present system is extremely time-consuming, and so not sustainable in the long term. The team is looking at other ways of continuing to provide a quality service. St. James is responsible for the final 3 joint services in August, and there will be an on-line service then.

Who should NOT attend worship when we reopen?

Public health authorities strongly recommend that people with a wide variety of health issues should seriously consider not attending: These conditions include: chronic lung disease (such as COPD), obesity, heart disease, sickle cell disease, severe hypertension, chronic kidney disease and diabetes, and anyone who is immunocompromised. If in doubt, please consult your doctor.

Please note that if you live with, or visit regularly, anyone with the above issues, you should consider the safety of those people and stay home.

Ladybug Daycare has already reopened, and is governed by strict rules. Any individuals/groups using the basement area must adhere to their rules, as well as ours.

September - possible scenario

We believe the building will begin to reopen for Church-related uses, with extreme caution, and starting with staff.

- Matty's Office door will be closed. You may need to phone or email your questions, or speak to her from the hallway.
- Rev. Maya will decide when/how she will speak in person with us

Survey

We will be sending out a short survey in the next couple of weeks to try to ascertain possible interest in 'live' church attendance in September, based on the above guidelines. Depending on the results of the survey, we will plan our Sunday Worship reopening accordingly.

Meanwhile we will try to keep you up to date on Transition plans, decisions and changes as things develop.

Keep safe and well.

If you have any comments, concerns, suggestions, etc. please let me or any of the team know: mmgodley@hotmail.com or (416) 912-4764

Transition Team: Mhairi 'Varry' Godley (Coordinator), Rod Lord, Brian Isard, Marty and Jon Linton, Linda Maw, Marie Truelove, Karen Munday, Eleanor Harris, Nancy Violo, Tony Gray, Karen Forgrave, and YOU.