

# **COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN**

## **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST ANGLICAN CHURCH**

*Please note: This is a Working Document that will be updated and edited regularly. Last edit: March 17, 2021*

### **Part 1: Communication**

This Operational Plan will be communicated to the Parish via a parish letter, Social Media, an instructional video and an encouragement to connect for clarification by phone or by email

### **Part 2: High Risk Demographic**

We recognize that many people in our parish are over 60 years of age. There are also a significant number of people with chronic health issues that place them in a high risk bracket. As such due diligence must be done to clean and disinfect surfaces in our church building, to ensure social distancing is practised and to properly screen and monitor those who attend times of worship or other gatherings in our facility.

### **Part 3: Modifying our Worship Space**

In order to practice social distancing we will need to restrict areas in which people tend to congregate or where bottlenecking occurs. To properly observe the guidelines pertaining to social distancing the following modifications have been made:

- Access to the Office and Sunday School Area is restricted to all except staff. Exceptions have been made for mid-week small groups. Such groups are able to gather in in the Sunday school spaces while maintaining proper social distancing. Mask wearing is mandatory. Frequent hand sanitizing is encouraged.

- The kitchen area is restricted
- Bathroom use will be reduced to one person at a time
- Chairs are spaced 2 metres (6 feet) apart in the worship space except for those in a common bubble.
- In the Orange Phase the number of chairs in the worship space will not exceed 50. In the Yellow Phase chairs will not exceed that of 50% capacity which is 344 in the entire building (about 200 in the worship space). In practice this will be far less given the need to maintain 2 meters social distance between those outside of their steady 15.
- The main doors will be an entrance only. At the time worship begins the doors will be shut and locked.
- The gym doors will be used as exit only doors. At the end of the worship service these will be propped open. Congregants will be directed to these doors while practicing social distancing. They will be reminded to move well away from the building before talking with one another (while practicing social distancing) so that everyone will be able to exit the building promptly.

#### **Part 4: Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette**

Hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes will be made available throughout the building.

- Posters have been placed over bathroom sinks that teach a proper hand-washing technique.
- People will be encouraged to bring their own personal bottles of hand sanitizer
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at the entrance to the worship space
- A hand washing station with soap and water will need to be provided for the Celebrant by the Communion Table
- People will must wear masks at all times while in the building.
- Masks will be made available to staff, greeters and wardens if needed

- While in the Orange Phase singing is not permitted as it is regarded as a high-risk activity

## **Part 5: Screening and Monitoring**

In order to ensure the health of all those attending worship services or other functions - everyone will be encouraged to remain home if they have any of the following symptoms:

*Fever above 38 degrees Celsius, a new cough, or worsening chronic cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, a new onset of fatigue, a new onset of muscle pain, diarrhea, loss of sense of taste, loss of sense of smell, and, in children, purple markings on the fingers and toes.*

Upon arrival at the church people will be asked if they have any of the symptoms listed above. They will also be asked if they have been out of province in the previous 14 days or if they have been exposed to anyone with the symptoms listed above in the previous 14 days. Those who respond in the negative to these questions will be permitted to enter the church building.

- An encouragement to stay home will be communicated through email, by phone and on social media.
- We will practice both active and passive forms of screening. When people arrive for worship they will be greeted in the parking lot by a volunteer who will ask the screening questions listed above.
- In addition, posters have been put in place that encourages people to ask themselves the same questions before entering the facility.
- To aid in the process of screening a Google form will be made available on the church website. Congregants will need to reserve seating on the form or by calling the church office. Seat reservations will be lifted 5 minutes before the worship service starts to allow others to enter.
- The entry doors, which will have been propped open to reduce the need to come into contact with handles will be closed and locked at the service time to ensure worshippers are properly screened.

Those who are admitted into the facility will then be greeted by a volunteer at the monitoring station - which will be located in the hall on the far side of the doors leading into the worship space. Each attendee will be asked their name and their phone number which will be recorded on a piece of paper. It will be communicated that this information will be solely for communication if someone in the congregation should contract COVID-19. If such an event were to occur each person present would be notified.

Following the service this sheet, which will include the date and time of the service, will be placed in a secure location.

## **Part 6: Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Following each event the church will be cleaned. Particular attention will be given to:

- Bathrooms
- Switches and Door Knobs (daily)
- Communion Vessels
- Microphones
- Sound Booth Items (keyboard, mouse, remote control)
- Lectern
- Chairs

## **Part 7: Roles & Responsibilities**

It will be the Rector and the Wardens who will be responsible for the Operational Plan. They will need to ensure that the policies are in conformity with the most up-to-date guidelines coming from the health minister, the Province of New Brunswick and the Diocese of Fredericton. The most up-to-date info can be found through the following url.

<https://nb.anglican.ca/resources/covid-19/pages/church-operational-plan>

The Volunteer Coordinator will look after scheduling the Greeters. Those on duty will need to be trained in their new roles as screeners and monitors. This training will be facilitated by the Rector and/or Wardens. It would be helpful to have a Warden present to supervise as people enter the building for worship.

## **Part 8: Worship**

To adhere to the restrictions set in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 worship services will not exceed that of 80 persons. Currently 2 times of worship are scheduled for Sundays at 8:30 am and 10:30 am. There is also a mid week service scheduled on Wednesdays at 10:00 am.

Worshippers will be required to sign up to attend a worship service through a link on our church website or by calling the office. Worshippers will be encouraged to select only one service per week.

Singing will be permitted at these services.

## **Offerings/Donations**

A box will be located at the doors to the worship space to receive Cheques and envelopes. Those who choose to deposit their cheques/ envelopes in this manner will do so as they enter the worship space and they will be reminded to not touch the box. E-transfers and E-offerings are still encouraged at this time.

At the time of the offertory the Greeter will come before the Altar and lift up the Collection Box during the prayer over the gifts. He or she will then lock it up in the church office.

The counters will be provided with gloves and masks to count the money and will be encouraged to wash their hands immediately upon completion.

## **The Holy Eucharist**

If the Holy Eucharist is celebrated it will be in one kind only (i.e. the Bread). The celebrant, will wash his or her hands before the table is prepared with soap and water. He or she will wear a mask during the preparation of the table, the prayer of consecration and during the distribution of the Sacrament. For the distribution, the priest alone will move to share the Eucharist with the Congregants. If the priest comes into contact with another person or touches his or her own face he or she will pause, and use hand sanitizer to clean their hands before continuing.

## **Part 9: Outside Groups**

The number of outside groups that use our facility will be restricted. It is suggested that support groups such as AA, Parkinson's, and Alzheimers be given access as soon as possible as these groups provide much needed support. The Community Food Smart Program will be given access to the building once a month from Nov. 2020 - May 2021. Community youth programs such including Scouts, Beavers and Brownies are also using the space, in compliance with the Operational Plan AND plans set in place by their respective organizations.

Group leaders will need to read and comply with the operational plan before they are given access to the Building. Specific procedures for each type of group will be developed and added to the parish plan.

Outside groups will not be permitted to prepare and/or serve food or refreshments at their meetings. Participants will be permitted to bring in their own refreshments provided they do not share their food with others.

**Alcoholics Anonymous.** Some concern has been expressed in regards to the monitoring system in that it fails to protect the anonymity of the

members of the AA group that meets in St. John's. A system has been developed which will allow members to place their name and phone number in an envelope and leave it with the person at the monitoring station. If someone in the group tests positive for COVID-19 the envelopes will be opened and those who were at risk to exposure will be contacted by the leader of the local group.

The doors to the building will be locked at the start of the group. Those who go out for a smoke break will not be re-admitted. There will be no food or drink prepared or distributed on site.

### **Part 10: Staffing**

Currently we have three people on Staff at St. John the Evangelist Church, with one person on sick leave. If the Rector becomes ill with COVID-19 pastoral responsibilities, including online interaction, will be passed on to the Honorary Assistants. As such these individuals will need to have access to the Church website, Facebook Page, Email Distribution List, Phone Ministry List and the Parish Youtube Channel.

If the sexton becomes ill with COVID-19 we will call upon volunteers to pick up his practice of cleaning and disinfecting the church. It would be helpful for the sexton to outline the weekly and daily schedule for this.

If the Administrative Support person falls ill we will call upon volunteers to offer administrative support. A job description for this role is currently being developed.