



Covid-19 Opening Protocols

July 15, 2020

Public Document

1. Introduction

Goal: Gradual, Phased-in Re-engagement from COVID-19 Pandemic at Nelson United Church. Key is to do this safely, faithfully, and well.

As a congregation within The United Church of Canada, we are part of a larger community of faithful congregations; through prayerful consideration of the information provided by the Province of BC Ministry of Health and the Pacific Mountain Regional Council (PMRC), this document will be our guide until the PMRC moves to Stage 2 and the Province to Phase 4. This document will be updated as required over the coming months.

The Province is currently in Phase 3 with the protocols of Phase 2 in place. The province has opened more sectors and provided greater clarity for different organizations to open. While the PMRC is in Stage 1—small groups of 6 gather in church buildings but worship remains online—there is provision for small groups of people to gather for worship and for small worship gatherings outside. In terms of PMRC planning, Stage 2 represents in-person gatherings for worship of up to 50 people; and Stage 3 is a return to in-person worship.

Trenea Duncan, the Executive Minister of the Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church, in her pandemic response wrote:

Dr Henry, our chief medical officer, has given us the opportunity for small gatherings, but has reminded us that we have a significant duty of care, and advocates that we do not take unnecessary risks. We are a people of faith, and like the disciples, we are called to trust that God is leading us as we make decisions about how to gather as the Body of Christ.

As stated in the goal above, our intention is to re-engage safely, faithfully and respecting each person in our care and all who use our building. Jesus taught us to love our neighbour and provided many examples and stories of what this means. In this time of the pandemic, love of neighbour is taking care not to spread the virus and to ensure that all enjoy good health and are kept safe.

2. Decision to move to partial Phase 2

While there is permission to gather in groups of up to 50 people in the Province of BC, it is the consideration of the NUC Board that we are not yet safe to do so. However, the Board has given permission for a small group of people who are not able to access the worship service online to gather in-person. Using a formula provided by

WorkSafeBC, the Board has ascertained that we can accommodate 19 people in the main part of the sanctuary, 6 in choir area, and 5 in balcony. Until mid-August, there will be a gathering Sunday morning of no more than 15 people excluding our worship leader, musician, Scripture reader, prayer writer, and technician. The sanctuary and all commonly touched surfaces will be sanitized after worship and at other times as required.

Maximums for other meeting spaces have also been determined:

- Trinity Lounge/Chapel: 8.
- St. Paul's Room: 11.
- Fairview Room: 11.

These numbers have all been posted on doors or walls in plain sight. As these spaces are not regularly used, they will be cleaned after any use. In all cases, if there is any uncertainty as to whether a meeting space or the sanctuary has been used, it will be cleaned.

For all gatherings, we will adhere to the Provincial Health protocols regarding distancing of 2 metres, no touching, no singing, and the wearing of a mask. At this time, gatherings are limited to less than 10 people, with appropriate physical distancing and adhering to the health protocols in this document.

3. Protocols That Apply

We have established a Safety Committee to oversee our safety during the pandemic. The Committee is made up of staff—Robyn (Minister of Music), Danaraj (Custodian), Lois (Church Administrator), David (Minister), Kathy (Board Member) and Lorna (Ministry & Personnel Member). The Safety Committee has created a document that will be our template for the specific duties required to keep us all safe and healthy.

- a) Do not come to the church if you are feeling sick; there are requirements that the Province has created. Do not come if you:
 - a. have any of the following symptoms: Fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, new muscle aches or headache, sore throat.
 - b. Have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days.
- b) Everyone entering the Nelson United Church:
 - a. Please wash your hands or clean them with hand sanitizer at the entrances before and after your visit.
 - b. Please maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.
 - c. When requested, please wear a mask.
- c) What we have done:
 - a. Posted signs through the church.
 - b. Put plexiglass in the office to protect our administrator.
 - c. Marked where people can sit in the pews.
 - d. Required that no more than one visitor be in the office at any time.
- d) What you can do:
 - a. Wash your hands at entry and exit from the building.
 - b. Maintain distancing of 2 m.
 - c. Follow any directions of ushers, monitors or church staff.

- d. Be aware of others around you and mindful of our care for each other.
 - e. Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
 - f. Do not sing and speak any responses softly to yourself.
- e) Cleaning
- a. Common areas will be cleaned with an appropriate agent after use and more often as necessary or if it is uncertain as to whether a room has been used. This will include the worship space and entrances, offices, washrooms, and high-touch surfaces.
 - b. As much as possible we will open windows and doors to provide airflow.
- f) We will not gather socially until able to do so; this means no sharing of food. If you use a mug or eating utensil, please place it in the receptacle in the small kitchen off the lounge or alert someone in the office. A staff person will wash the dishes.

4. Sunday Morning Worship

While we are all anxious to return to worship, we are not able to do so at this time; we will gradually increase the number of people attending as we are permitted by the Province of BC. Priority in worship will be given to live-streaming.

Attendance on Sunday mornings will be limited to the following:

- a) Those directly involved in the production of the service (up to 6 people)
- b) Members of the congregation who are unable to view the live stream service due to a lack of internet access and any who drive them (up to a maximum of 15 people).

Everyone attending Sunday services will be expected to follow the protocols detailed above.

5. Communication.

This document and protocols will be shared with the congregation:

- a) A NUC News document and letter to those who don't receive the newsletter.
- b) Verbally during Sunday morning worship.
- c) Posted prominently on our website.
- d) Posted on Facebook.
- e) Posted on bulletin boards within the church building.

Rental Groups will be alerted to the protocols listed above as part of the rental agreement that is to be signed.