

MINUTES – Woodlawn United Church Council June 24th, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Council Co-Chair Peter Woods called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring WUC follows the recommendations of our federal, provincial and municipal leadership to refrain from public gatherings and meetings, chair Peter coordinated a video conference so we may continue the work of Woodlawn United Church.

In Attendance via Video: Allan Eddy, Barry Zwicker, Bob Watt, Brian Moors, Cathy Kay, Dennis Dean, Helen Dixon, Kathy Dean, Keith Musselman, Kerri Graham, Peter Woods, Rev Mary Lynne Whyte, Paul Whyte,

Representing Region 15 – Rev. David Hewitt (Regional Minister), Rev. Dr. Linda Yates (Region representative to Woodlawn Community of Faith Profile Team)

Community of Faith Profile Team – Don Trider, Faye Gunter, Jamie Masse, Jerry Jackson, Maarten Kramer, Stephanie Bennett.

WELCOME: Peter welcomed all to the meeting.

OPENING PRAYER: Dennis and Kathy led the meeting in reciting the New Creed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: - *The Agenda, was approved by consensus. (Appendix A)*

ADJOURNMENT TIME – Agreed, by consensus, to an adjournment time of 9:30,

Peter spoke to the protocol to be followed during the discussion to follow; i.e, one person speaks at a time, raise ‘hand’ to be recognized, be respectful, etc.

CORRESPONDENCE: Region 15 – Rev. Dr Linda Yates – Disband Community of Faith Profile Team

Peter invited Rev. Yates to speak to her recommendations to the Region that the CoFP Team be disbanded and an intentional interim minister be called to Woodlawn for a period of up to three years. Rev. Yates explained her rationale and there followed a time of questions and answers. Rev David Hewitt informed the meeting that the Region Pastoral Relations Committee was meeting on June 26 (two days hence) and Rev. Yates’s report would be discussed at that time. David advised Peter that if the Council required more time to discuss the report, and if he were advised by tomorrow (June 25) he would ask for a delay before bringing the report to the Region,

Peter thanked Rev. David and Rev. Linda as they departed the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *The minutes of May 20th, 2020 were accepted by consensus.*

OLD BUSINESS & BUSINESS ARISING:

- 1 – **WUC POLICY REVIEW** – Bob indicated the Trustees, Communications and Admin & Management teams had previously presented policies for ratification and which had been returned pending clarification and/or recommended changes.
- 2 – **TEMPORARY PERSONNEL** – Peter called for approval of the Job Descriptions for Interim Minister and Youth Coordinator as developed and included with the agenda. Mary Lynne indicated she had not received copies of the Job Descriptions and was assured by Helen and Cathy that they did not differ greatly from Phillips. Bob was requested to forward copies to Mary Lynne. ***It was agreed by consensus that Council accept the Job Descriptions as distributed.*** (Copies attached)
- 3 – **CHARGING FOR BLESSINGS** – **By consensus, it was agreed to defer to the next Council Meeting.**

4 - COUNCIL RETREAT – Council Co-Chair (Defer)

5 – GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT UPDATE – (Defer)

NEW BUSINESS:

1 – Council Membership – Peter reminded the meeting that it was Council’s responsibility to fill Council vacancies between AGMs and that Cathy Kay had agreed to accept the position of co-chair of M&P.

Peter also reported that Paul’s membership transfer had been received and he could now accept the cochair position of the Comminutions Team. ***Both were welcomed, by consensus, to the Council.***

2 – Transitioning Team – Peter invited Allan, chair of the Transitioning Team to bring Council up to date on the teams’ progress. Allan reported that the ad-hoc committee approved by Council to look at ‘how we go about reopening the Woodlawn facilities consisted of eight persons; Allan Eddy (Chair), Art Theuerkauf, Dodie Covert, Dr. Graham Pace, Katie Logan, Rev. Mary Lynne Whyte, Peter Woods and Teri Giannou. Allan reported the committee was taking the approach of putting together a ‘terms of reference’ that would identify plans any group, committee, rental, would have to follow before being granted permission to use the facility. Allan referred to the list of nine documents provided as the basis for the terms of reference and reported that staff has had the opportunity to review and recommend changes. **Council agreed by consensus to the process recommended by the Transition Team and requested a July 6/2020 date for the Transition Team to report their recommended Terms of Reference.**

Round Table Discussion – Request Use of Facilities for Wedding. Mary Lynne informed the meeting that there has been a request from Lisa Allen and Gus Webb to use the facilities for a wedding and reception on Aug.2nd. Discussion around the timing, availability of clergy, and readiness of the facility, the Department of Health guidelines etc. followed. As there had been no personal contact made with Mary Lynne, the request having been made through the office, it was agreed that Mary Lynne and Peter would arrange a Zoom meeting with Gus and Lisa asap. **By consensus it was agreed that every attempt would be made to accommodate their request.**

3 – Live Streaming – Deferred

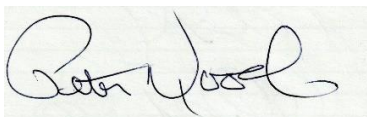
4 – Congregation Update – Peter reported that there was no follow up from Phillip on the recommendation made during the May meeting that a congregational update be made in conjunction with the Sunday worship. It was suggested that Mary Lynne and the co-chairs of Council could record an update in the sanctuary which could then be inserted into Mary Lynne’s worship before is placed on-line on a Sunday morning. It was agreed Peter would have follow up discussions on this with Mary Lynne.

5 – A&M Update – Keith apologized for not having a report for the meeting but would forward one to the secretary for circulation.

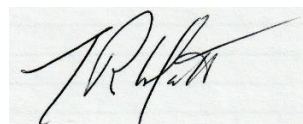
CLOSING PRAYER – Peter called on Allan to lead in a closing prayer.

NEXT MEETING – July 15th, 2020

ADJOURNMENT – Peter adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.



Peter Woods: Co-Chair of Council



Submitted

J Robert Watt - Secretary, WUC Council

Woodlawn United Church Council - *AGENDA*

June 24th, 2020

7 PM – ZOOM Video Call

Call to Order - Co-Chair Peter Woods

Opening Prayer – Trustees

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda -

Time of Adjournment –

Correspondence – 1) Region 15 – Rev. Dr Linda Yates – Disband Community of Faith Profile Team

(Less Rev. Ross Bartlett April 2018 Report – 39 Pages – Previously presented to Council)

2) Region 15 – Letter to Prime Minister & Sample letter

Discussion & Q&A – Disband Community of Faith Profile Team

Approval of Minutes of May 20th, 2020

Old Business & Business Arising:

1 – WUC Policy Review – Updates from Teams/Committee (See Reports)

2 – Temporary Personnel – Job Descriptions -Temporary personnel

3 – Charging for Blessings – Set fee for Blessings

4 - Council Retreat – Council Co-Chair (Defer)

5 – Governance Document Update – (Defer)

New Business:

1 – Council Membership – Cathy Kay (M&P co-chair), Paul Whyte (Communications)

2 – Transitioning Team – Report – Allan Eddy – Chair

3 - Live Streaming – Introduction - Paul Whyte

4 – Congregation Update – Peter and Kathy

5 – A&M Update – Keith Musselman - ?????

Next Meeting Date – July 15th, 2020

Closing Prayer – Trustees

Adjourn

Reports: Membership Clerk Policies Live Streaming – (Comm)

Temporary Personnel - Job Descriptions Transitioning Team

Membership Clerk – May 2020 Report – Roll Changes

MEMBERSHIP CLERK REPORT	
Congregational Roll – Deleted	Raymond Miller – Deceased – May 3/2020
	Carl Armsworthy – Deceased – May 13/2020
	Bill Parker - Deceased – May 15/2020
Historical Roll – Deleted	Carl Armsworthy – Deceased – May 13/2020
	Bill Parker - Deceased – May 15/2020

Policy Review Update

During the September 2019 Council Meeting the secretary circulated a schedule of the Woodlawn United Church Policies. It was agreed that the Teams responsible for initiating a specific policy would review the policy and report back to council if the policy was still relevant, recommended change etc.

Currently the following policies have not yet been brought back to Council.

Policy Name	Responsible Team	Pages	Date Approved	Date Revised
Animal	Stewardship / Trustees	1	Sept 15 2015	
Communication	Communication	2	May 20 2015	
Conflict Resolution	Ministry & Personnel	1	Not Approved	
Facility License & Space	Admin & Management	5	June, 2017	
Personnel Policy	Ministry & Personnel	10	Jan 20 2016	
Sabbatical Leave	Ministry & Personnel	3	2013	
Screening of Volunteers	Community Care & Youth	2	Apr 21 2010	Feb 21 2018

CORRESPONDENCE

Woodlawn Report

by Rev. Dr. Linda Yates

Region 15 Representative to the Woodlawn Community of Faith Profile Committee June 11, 2020

Introduction

I was appointed as the Region 15 Representative to the Woodlawn Community of Faith Profile Committee in the early summer of 2019. I have worked over the last year with them through a series of meetings and projects. I have read numerous informative documents that were generated before and during the work we have done together, including a previous consultation with Rev. Dr. Ross Bartlett (see attachment). I have had a number of conversations with the members of their Ministry team throughout the year. I have read through all of the material generated by the excellent congregational consultation facilitated by the diligent, hard-working CoF profile team. After prayerful consideration, it has become clear that Woodlawn United Church needs to enter into a three-year period of Intentional Interim Ministry.

Background

Woodlawn United Church is in the unusual position of having two of their current three-person Ministry team leave at the end of June, 2020. There is an ordained Minister, Rev. Mary Lynne Whyte, whose responsibilities are mostly around Pastoral Care, but these duties have expanded of late to include varying aspects of worship and administration. She is an Appointment and has recently had her term renewed until the end of 2021. The departure of Personnel represents an opportunity for revisioning the mission and goals of Woodlawn as well as the congregations' role in the surrounding community. The role of the CoF Profile Committee often seemed nebulous in its connection to the Board and was expansive in its own perceived responsibilities. For example, there was a suggestion by the Committee Chair that the committee take responsibility for designing and facilitating an exciting and experimental new form of worship. The committee decided it was not within their scope. The Committee did a fine piece of consultative work which saw 100 congregants offer up their opinions and hopes for Woodlawn. The Committee should be proud of this (see attachment). It is a foundational piece of work that has led to some important realizations about the need for critical strategic planning.

Woodlawn hovers between a Pastoral Sized congregation (50-150 worshipping on a Sunday), and a program-sized congregation (150-250 worshipping on a Sunday). This is the most anxiety provoking size to be. Transitioning to either a larger or smaller category is fraught with anxiety. The congregation is aware many of the stalwart workers are aging and there does not seem to be a wholesale willingness to replace them in their current work. Likewise, attendance has dropped off to some extent (pre-Covid). This has caused some anxiety in the congregation regarding financial sustainability which resulted in the creation of a Sustainability Committee, which seems to have a great deal of influence within the congregation. The Sustainability Committee was well represented on the Community of Faith Profile Committee. For all of the anxiety expressed about the ability to meet future financial obligations, Woodlawn seems to consistently meet their budget. There is a vibrant younger family and young adult component at Woodlawn who feel empowered to lead and are very interested in experimenting with worship and community service. New people are coming and are eager to express their faith and commit to it in new ways within the Woodlawn setting. This is seen as a positive by all generations.

Throughout the meetings there has been a great deal of discussion about the role of clergy at Woodlawn. The question of accountability has come up at almost every meeting. There have been some documents produced, extensive emails between myself and the CoF Profile Committee Chair, emails between the CoF Committee Chair

and the Board, emails between the Board and the Regional Minister about this topic. Yet serious problems persist in the unusual confusion and mistrust concerning the role of Ministry Personnel in congregational life and polity.

Finally, as with all congregations at this time, the new Covid reality has placed additional pressures on the congregation, while also opening up ideas for new ways to worship and be together.

Intentional Interim Minister, the Rev. Dr. Ross Bartlett advises:

Interim Ministry is recommended for a variety of circumstances in the life of a congregation. Interim ministers have special training to assist communities of faith address the following situations:

- * *when there has been a long pastorate (even when successful) to allow folk to disengage from the previous relationship and enter into a new one;*
- * *when there has been a season of serious conflict where there needs to be healing and practicing new ways of relating;*
- * *when a congregation wants to clarify its next steps in mission before seeking to call new ministry personnel;*
- * *when a congregation needs to enter into a significant change in its governance structure to respond to current opportunities;*
- * *after a merger or amalgamation*

In company with the community of faith, specific and measurable goals are identified and the steps to accomplish them clarified. With those goals clarified, the congregation and the Interim Minister identifies which ministry tasks are done by the clergy and which will be taken up by the congregation. Regular reporting and communication are key parts of the process.

Departure of Staff

Rev. Phillip Kennedy has been at Woodlawn for well over ten years. When clergy have been in a pastorate for ten years or more bonds develop, patterns are created and congregational attachment is entrenched. There is disruption with one long-serving Minister leaving, let alone two-thirds of the team. It will take a particular clergy skill set to work with a congregation as they move through this significant and profound change.

Clergy accountability and relationship with the Congregational Governance

It would appear that there has been a significant amount of conflict between the clergy in Woodlawn and the governance structure. Clergy were criticized for not sticking to their job description (for example the Youth Minister decided to supervise office staff) and also for sticking to their position description. Frustration was expressed about clergy being unwilling to do something they were asked to do because it did not fit within their description. When position descriptions were being floated by the CoF Profile team, there was a resistance to committing to any kind of position description in the interest of being creative and “out of the box.” Many discussions were had about accountability of clergy. I wrote a document about the covenantal relationship between a CoF and their clergy which touched on this as well as the question of accountability (see attached). What in their history has led to this mistrust of clergy? How can Woodlawn governance move toward a healthier relationship with their clergy?

Governance

In my time with the CoF Profile committee, there has been discussion about future governance reform. It appears that there has been some governance reform already. The roles and responsibilities of committees do not seem clear. For example, the Sustainability Committee seems to have some official and unofficial influence over many of Woodlawn’s decisions. There would seem to be some disconnect between the CoF Profile committee and the Board, having had some communication between the Board and the CoF Profile committee about next steps in process and some big philosophical questions about the role of Ministry personnel and the relationship of the United Church of Canada, in general, (see below). I have offered several times to appear before the Board to answer questions.

Questions persist, but I have not been invited to the board to work with them to find answers. I have been copied on answers to emails directed to the Region 15 Minister that would have been easily answered by myself.

Governance is important. Even blue-sky and outside-the-box visioning requires a process and an accounting to the congregation through some kind of recognized reporting structure. In these new times, a flexible structure is needed in which creativity can happen, but there exists enough accountability to ensure financial, ethical and legal obligations are met. Some in Woodlawn have expressed an interest in creating such a structure. Others do not see the necessity.

Relationship with the United Church of Canada

Throughout my time on the CoF Profile Committee expressions of frustration and mistrust of the United Church of Canada as a structure and denominational entity have been expressed. While this is not unusual in the era since the UCC restructuring, my sense is that this skepticism and mistrust preceded the new Model. The source of this needs to be explored for the benefit of all. A new relationship needs to be encouraged.

New Expressions of Faith

An exciting and positive development at Woodlawn has been the presence of an empowered laity who envision new ways of living out Christ's mission. They are usually under 45 and have no baggage associated with previous conflicts. There is an expressed desire for these new visions and explorations to be realized. In most congregations, this can result in conflict between the "established" congregation and the fresh explorers. A skilled Interim Minister would be able to help empower these lay-leaders while helping the congregation work through any possible conflict.

The Need for a Strategic Plan

It became clear after the congregational consultation; the development of a long-term strategy is required in order for Woodlawn to thrive. Fortunately, Woodlawn has many talented, faithful people who can realize this. There have been many discussions about the need for a strategic plan. One member provided a possible template for a path forward. I include it as an attachment (*Woodlawn Next Steps*) to demonstrate the variety of discussions at the CoF Profile Committee about possible future scenarios. There seemed to be recognition in the consultation that, with so many possibilities and challenges before them, a cogent plan is needed that provides adaptive solutions, as opposed to technical solutions. What has become clear from all the consultations is that Woodlawn requires a particular kind of Ministry for a three-year period to help them with develop their plan based on a foundation of spirituality and a sense of mission. *The kind of clergy they require before and while the plan is being completed may be very different than the clergy team they require as a result of the plan.*

Recommendations

- 1) All of the above factors indicate a community in flux, confusion and with a multiplicity of possible paths forward. It would be unethical to place a team of Ministers in Woodlawn if the issues above remain unaddressed, particularly those related to the mistrust of clergy. It is a recipe for disappointment and possible relational damage. Instead, the placement of a qualified Intentional Interim Minister who has strong leadership skills is critical.
- 2) Rev. Mary Lynne Whyte should be retained throughout the 3 years. She is well respected by the congregation and is a calm, caring presence. She should be offered the option to apply for one of whatever positions are created as a result of the plan developed in the Interim.
- 3) I can assist with the development of an Interim Ministry Proposal, but recommend when they engage their Intentional Interim Ministry process, they begin with a new Region 15 liaison as part of their Transition Team. The task before that liaison will be very different than the one I was presented with.
- 4) The CoF Profile team should be dissolved as the congregation gets ready to consider the creation of an Interim Ministry Proposal. A sub-committee of the congregation can be appointed at a Congregational Meeting. The task of

that sub-Committee will be to create a Proposal (see Intentional Interim Ministry handbook for Boards, attached). Some members of the CoF Profile team may want to re-offer for that task.

I appreciated my journey with Woodlawn. I am hopeful because the Holy Spirit is strong within them.

In Christ's Service

Rev. Dr. Linda Yates

How should we go forward?

- Woodlawn United Church, led by the Community of Faith Profile Committee and Council, should develop a strategic plan and framework to guide the next phase of church evolution, with our new ministerial and staff team.
- The strategic plan will be full of goals and objectives for Woodlawn United Church.
- The strategic plan **cannot be** an operational plan of programs and initiatives. Programs fulfill outcomes. Outcomes fulfill objectives and goals.
- The new ministerial team will be tasked with operationalizing the strategic plan. They should be given a clear (reasonable) date to deliver an operational plan to Council and ultimately the congregation.
- The operational plan will include the proposal of pilots, programs and plans for change management, along with financial and human resource needs.
- Before we engage in a strategic plan, Woodlawn United should conduct a comprehensive audit of human, capital and programming assets. Think the annual report, but including thoughtfulness to active volunteers, volunteer bottlenecks, program uptake and more. The benefit of this audit would be three-fold:
 - o It will help future staff to get a grasp of recent history, context, and resources
 - o It will help the strategic plan process in understanding our strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.
 - o It will help to better communicate to the congregation – especially newer congregants – about church efforts and opportunities. This is both an opportunity for engagement of those new congregants, but it helps with the recruitment – if we know of opportunities that resonate with our neighbours, we have better in's to invite them
- If Woodlawn has any post secondary students in its membership, it might be an option to explore the new Canada Student Service Grant offered this summer to complete this audit.

If I was to establish a strategic plan (our goals and outcomes) without the proposed audit, these would be the pillars of my strategic plan:

- **Worship** – Continue to offer a weekly Sunday service that draws inspiration, challenges the congregation, and fosters discussion for spiritual well being. Start to explore, pilot, and ultimately entrench alternative worship approaches (ex. The Annex, Messy Church).
- **Outreach and Community** – Woodlawn is seen a leader for Social Justice in our neighbour, Dartmouth, the HRM and the rest of the province. Leadership would manifest in both the service and programs offered to the broader community. Woodlawn empowers its ministers to be champions in interfaith and demonstrates Christian leadership in the broader community.
- **Pastoral Care** – Everyone recognizes that the time and energy in Pastoral Care cannot be measured against a normal day, every minister will share the responsibilities of Pastoral Care. A member of the faith team will take on a leadership role of Pastoral Care and will be accountable to ensuring requests and obligations are met and work directly with lay support teams.
- **Youth** – Space is made for youth in worship and congregational activities. Every program and activity will ensure that there is youth and young family lens. Woodlawn United is a safe and inclusive space for all

youth, inside and outside the congregation. Youth strengths are fostered so that they may contribute to both Church and Community.

- **Fellowship** – Woodlawn strives to offer a faith community that exists like family. Programs must evolve with the needs of the congregation and the talents of volunteer / lay person champions. The faith team is tasked with helping to foster lay person champions.
- **Music** – Is an essential part of worship, fellowship, and outreach for Woodlawn. The Church has many existing relationships with bands and concerts offered to the broader community currently enjoyed in the evenings. During service, our community has benefited from a strong choir program which needs to be supported. It can also grow by encouraging different experiences from both inside of the church, by encouraging youth to participate and outside the church by inviting different groups, choirs, bands, singers to preform at Woodlawn.
- **Recruitment** – Underpinning a lot the anxieties and concerns at WUC, is the aging congregation and sustainability. Therefore, all efforts must be made to encourage growth of the Church, if we do not intentionally share what is going on inside our doors no one is going to feel welcomed to join. A strategy for recruitment should be developed and employed. A targeted recruitment of young families, both in the neighbourhood and the broader community should be at the heart of this strategy.

Who would lead what?

- A lot of this question is addressed in the draft plan. I think it would need to be fleshed out, but I would like to see:

Minister One – Full Time Community and Outreach	Minister Two – Full Time Pastoral Care	Youth, Young Families and Volunteer Coordinator – Staff member – Full Time
Ministers: Responsible for Funerals, Baptisms, Marriage		
Collaboratively Responsible For:		
- Would be responsible for operationalization and change-management of the Strategic Plan.		
- One of the three will be responsible for General Administration and Council, they pick - Fellowship, Worship and Recruitment		

- Secretary full time – could be job shared ○ Does this include bookkeeping, what else is involved with this position?
- Organist / Choir Director – could be one or two persons.

What are the characteristics of who we want to be looking for?

Characteristics of the team, I would be looking for individuals presenting:

- People who is dynamic, willing to adapt and are flexible
- Strong public speaking and presentation skills
- Demonstrates self-motivation and initiative
- Joyful and willing to take risks, make mistakes
- Active listener

- Team orientated motivators
- Has project management skills, including detail orientated and organized, should be willing to give examples
 - Worked with volunteers
- Conflict Management and demonstrates patience
- Reflective
- Diverse

Summary of What you told us. (Report from CoFP Team)

April 28, 2020

The Community of Faith profile Team has been holding consultation sessions since December 2019. We invited participation from you the congregation by email, announcements during service and through direct requests to all of Woodlawn's standing committees.

You answered the call! We held 14 different sessions with well over one hundred different people participating. We offered a secure email for direct input, which has been used by a few. Overall, we are very pleased with the number of people who have contributed their thoughts and ideas. This illustrates how committed the Woodlawn community is to our church and demonstrates a desire to make our church relevant and meaningful to its members and the greater community.

There were many responses to each of the questions we asked you to consider. Below is a summary of what we believe captures the majority of your comments and wishes. Here is what we have heard you say:

It is clear to the Community of Faith Committee that congregants feel very connected to existing and traditional programs, and to the staff and ministerial team. In fact we heard so many stories and anecdotes of connections, conversations, inspirations and hugs from the current team and past ones. Existing in the mix of comments are expressions of appreciation for previous Staff and also concern about the financial viability of the current Staff complement.

We also explored some of the areas in which there exists some opportunity for us to continue to fulfill God's will for our congregation, the United church and the Woodlawn community at large. What is also clear is that congregants both possess unique ideas and are open to creative programs and changes to any number of ministries from music to fellowship to youth.

We have been encouraged by our conversations and the insights we have heard, but we are also humbled that working on what the Woodlawn United Church can be in the next 5, 10 years. We acknowledge that we must keep future members of our evolving community of faith in mind as we proceed.

This report is focused on what we gathered from current members who have shared their thoughts and ideas with us. From our conversations, the following ministries in no particular order were seen as top priorities, and should be top of mind when taking our next steps:

- Pastoral Care
- Fellowship
- Music
- Outreach
- Youth

There were numerous comments focused on expanding **Pastoral Care**. It is clear from the consultations that personal ministerial relationships are an important element of spiritual well-being for many. While there was great praise for our current programs and offering there is always room to grow and some interesting ideas to build from for future leadership.

Our church revolves around the need for **Fellowship**. Next to the relationships with our Ministry Team, a relationship with fellow congregants – friends who become family – is essential to the Woodlawn experience. Many participants reflected on the need for more fellowship opportunities – and often, not just for their own age group. Activities such as Fish Chowders were mentioned as an

opportunity for Fellowship, as well as a fund raiser. Couples Club is seen as a flagship program to be expanded. Home Church, arts and sharing programming and TGIT were mentioned with great love. There were references to past programs lost and missed, as well as new ideas for connecting with one another. The desire for the facilitation of intergenerational and interfamilial relationships was a sentiment that resonated with us.

The **Music Ministry** is something in which many people demonstrated great pride, while others articulated appreciation. Sharing our faith through music is important to a wide cross-section of the congregation. Some commented on the fact that the organ, traditional hymns and anthems are important to them. Others felt a diversity of music offerings, from traditional to contemporary, is an important shift. Perhaps the most consistent sentiment shared amongst different groups, was the need to re-engage youth in Woodlawn's Music Ministry, an effort which would certainly require an intentional program and leadership to champion it.

Our congregation understands their Christian responsibility for their neighbours and the community outside of the church walls. With pride for the existing **Outreach** ministries such as the Food Bank and the DunGen, congregants believe that it is Woodlawn United Church's responsibility to advocate for social justice in Dartmouth, in Nova Scotia and around the world, and to identify meaningful and intentional contributions for the community. This was an area where many specific and creative programming ideas were shared, which must be explored by new staff leadership in the future.

Finally, it was abundantly clear that the Woodlawn congregation has a tremendous amount of pride, love and commitment to children, youth, young adults and young families; it was a sentiment repeated throughout every meeting held. Future leadership in the **Youth Ministry** will be expected to prioritize the maintenance and enhancement of close meaningful relationships with our youth and provide to them an intentional Christ Centered place for their growth and development. A desire for a strong Sunday School program, youth group, and youth choir were all mentioned on multiple occasions. These were the consistent sentiments shared. There were many more nuanced anecdotes and statements offered, however we believe they are generally reflected above.

It is with great humility and anticipation that the Community of Faith Profile Committee shares these reflections with the larger Woodlawn united community. This experience has been an uplifting one. As we read and tried to interpret the comments from our Community of Faith, we can see how much inspiration and hope for improving Woodlawn there is. There is a love for the church, the programs and the services that has been woven throughout each of the sessions and a real desire to offer more for our community.

We hope that these priorities, in balance with one another, reflect what it is you feel, and what you told us. Have we heard you correctly, or is there more we should know? We now need your feedback in order to continue our process.

During the consultation sessions a lot of folks indicated that we may need to change how we deliver our programs, services, even outreach to meet the needs of others. This is so true now that we are all experiencing the impacts of COVID 19. The virus was not rampant during our consultations but clearly we are looking at a changing NORMAL going forward. We will be considering what we have experienced and learned from this difficult time and attempting to incorporate specific recommendations in our final report that address this situation.

Given we are not holding services yet, please let us know through email or by calling one of us on the committee to share your thoughts on the above summary. We can be reached at: communityprofile@woodlawnunited.ca.

Next steps:

- 1) Once we have your responses and a level of comfort we have heard you accurately we plan to look into our existing programs and services to evaluate how well they are meeting the desired outcomes or are headed in the right direction.
- 2) As part of the strong outreach interest we have heard we will try and come up with an effective way of communicating with outside community groups. We would normally seek face to face meetings but that may not be possible in the near future.
- 3) We will be looking into new or alternative ways of achieving the interests put forward by you. This will involve understanding the impacts on all resources including staffing and of course financial impacts
- 4) Once we have all of the above organized and ready for presentation we will develop an open process to present, discuss and ultimately present specific recommendations to Council and you the Congregation.

Respectively Submitted for your review and consideration.
Your Community of Faith Profile Team

Accountability in the Pastoral Relationship

A paper for Woodlawn United Church
By Rev. Dr. Linda Yates, Liaison for Region 15

Covenant

One of the primary theological principles underlying all Judeo-Christian beliefs and practice is the idea of Covenant. A covenant is more than a contract binding people or entities. A covenant within the church is understood as a binding together of people and the Holy into a spiritual relationship. This has practical implications. A church-sanctioned marriage is a covenant, while a Justice of the Peace presided marriage is a contract. Within a church marriage, vows are made between the couple and promises are also made to God. It is understood that God also promises to hold and infuse the marriage with the Holy Spirit. Like-wise Baptism is a covenant. When a baby is baptised, the parents make declarations of their faith and promises to God. God is understood to work with and commit to the faith-filled spiritual life of the child in its relationship with the parents and church community. The church community makes vows and promises to the child and to God. The circle of vows is a covenant.

For thousands of years, God has called forth individuals who are tested and confirmed by the collective Communities of Faith as being fit and properly trained for particular service in ministry. The training has evolved over the years, as various societies have, but the concept that God calls for people to serve God and God's people and sets apart such people to be able to do so has not changed. The care and inspiring of the vulnerable is a duty so fraught with power issues and the needed theological knowledge so broad, the requirement for training has almost always been long, multi-year processes. The process differs in some ways between denominations, but the core actions of recognition are essentially the same. Once an educated and trained recognized person is chosen, a covenant is made between the ministry personnel, the Community served and the adjudicatory body (in the UCC case, this is the Region). The Spirit is called upon to bless and empower the sanctioned person, the community they serve and the covenantal promises they have made together. This is the circle of the covenant.

The 2019 version of the UCC Pastoral Relations Handbook begins with the following statement:

A covenant is now defined as follows (The Manual, 2019, section I.1):

A "covenant" is between God, the ministry personnel, the community of faith or other ministry, and the wider United Church as represented by the regional council. The covenant may include other parties that are integral to living out the gospel in community as God calls us.

*A covenant with a community of faith is established by call or appointment. It **creates** a pastoral relationship and is governed by [pastoral relations policies].*

Why does this matter? Creating positions descriptions and understanding the relationship between Ministry Personnel and CoF hinges on the covenantal relationship. The participants bind themselves to each other spiritually, which is something that does not happen in other organizations. It profoundly alters the understanding of the relationship. Having said that, Ministry Personnel also are to be treated with the basic Human Rights that all citizens enjoy, including labour law etc.

Accountability

Throughout our meetings together there have been a couple of incidents that are frequently cited when discussions about accountability within the broad framework of “open” visioning occur. First, it has often been cited that sometime Staff will respond with “that’s not in my job description” when being asked to do something by someone, presumably (hopefully) someone in authority. Also, there is the occurrence of Staff taking on responsibilities not deemed to be theirs, such as supervision of office staff, when this was not in their job description. It is helpful that these are raised because they can be examined to tease apart assumptions and accountability.

- 1) In the first instance, it would seem that someone had expectations that Staff would do some work that Staff felt was not in their job description. In this case, both parties expect Staff will do certain things that are included in their broad range of duties, but the two disagree about what that is. What is absent from this discussion, on both sides of this encounter, is the assumption that Staff have no job description or expectations. Every member of every CoF in every time, everywhere have assumptions about what Staff should and should not do. They are implicit to being human. We have expectations. Not having a job description does not remove these assumptions. Not having a job description may in fact, amplify confusion, animosity and discord in the congregation. Therefore, a good job description puts some recognizable, reasonable, congregationally-based-need-identified expectations and boundaries around employee roles. These can be referred to by both congregation members and Staff.
- 2) In the second instance, due to some kind of defacto gap, the Youth Minister took responsibility for supervising office staff. This was apparently done without consultation of Board and M&P. Board members and others objected that Ministry Personnel cannot take it upon themselves to acquire new supervisory duties. This is a correct observation. However, those expectations highlight the same point as above. There are clearly position descriptions considered to have been violated. In this case, rather than the Staff member saying “this is not in my job description,” they have said, “this will be in my job description from here on.” In this case the Board would be quite correct to ask M&P to require Staff to stay within the confines of their role description. If M&P found there was reason to challenge this, they would need to bring it to the board as it does substantially change the Staff person’s roles and responsibilities. In this case, the position description helps the Board define a management and supervision problem that is not being served by the current configuration of Staff.

In both cases, objections were raised by Board members about perceived violations of role parameters. A CoF cannot say on one hand, that they want loose job descriptions so Staff can be asked to do whatever seems pertinent and not be bound by their position description and be “flexible,” but then also object when Staff, on their own in addition to their job description, take up responsibilities that seem to need doing for the good of the organization. It cannot be both ways, as both sets of assumptions are mutually exclusive.

In a well-functioning CoF, Staff are considered to be valuable guides, leaders and empowerers. Staff do not seek to control the Board or congregation but rather support the direction and goals and hopes of the Board and, in particular, draw the Board’s attention to the lead of the Holy Spirit. The Board’s responsibility is to represent and lead with the guidance of the congregation. If one wants to know where the power really resides in the CoF, it is

useful to remember that the Congregational Meeting is the ultimate decision-maker. They can over-rule the Board. The Minister is under the discipline and oversight of the Region. A congregation cannot discipline a Minister. The Minister is also the one of the Region 15 representatives, therefore at least one designated Ministry Personnel member must be present for a quorum at meetings. This is so Personnel can offer guidance and also continuity from and for the UCC. The M&P committee acts as the liaison between the CoF and the Ministry Personnel. The M&P can ask Staff for goals and report these to the Board. An annual review of goals is a good practice for M&P. At all times, the salaries, vacation schedules and Continuing Education plans are available to the Boards. At the Annual Meeting, Staff salaries must be available upon request and increases in salary approved as part of the annual budget. This creates accountability and trust among the congregation.

Position Descriptions

In all organizations and businesses, job descriptions and expectations are essential to productivity and trust. This is so that personnel can understand what is expected of them and helps them to achieve the organization's goals. Position descriptions must be specific enough to provide boundaries for both Staff and CoF but loose enough to allow appropriate creativity and flexibility. An understanding of position priorities is important too. Clearly, someone calling the Lead Minister to demand they visit their sick cousin who just had an appendectomy when the minister must go to a board meeting is inappropriate. (This happens so often, it is shocking). A job description helps with this in that it gives priorities to each position. This, might, for example, be appropriate for the Pastoral Care Minister on duty that day to carry out. If Woodlawn is in a time of dreaming, visioning and trying new things this needs to be in the position description along with time expectations. As well, if dreaming about establishing "out-of-the-box" type of church, then this expectation should be described and accounted for in terms of time. If you want to work toward a Ministry Team approach, this needs to be named, and the "team" aspect given hours and support. As with all new things which take years to develop, if you do your job correctly and Woodlawn experiences good, radical, growth-building change, you will also need to have a plan for receiving criticism of the Minister(s).

It is also important to note that position descriptions can dramatically change, if circumstances require it. These need to follow appropriate processes, however. Remember that in the rest of the world "constructive dismissal" is a compensable violation. This is where the role expectation has changed so dramatically, without the permission of the employee, that they are no longer able to do their job very well. Working in partnership with the Minister as positions change can be very fruitful. I was called to St. John's United Church in Halifax as their Principle Ordained Minister, but soon found that a huge re-visioning process was needed. I moved into a role of helping them facilitate that, then finally into a role in which an Incorporated Ministry was envisioned for a big Assisted Living Development. For the latter, I very quickly had to learn about construction, Seniors Assisted Living etc....At each stage, I successfully worked with M&P and the Board to discuss the changing Ministry role and what was expected. Regular communication and trust is key.

Summary

When a covenant is made between Ministry Personnel and the CoF, the Ministry Personnel is under the discipline of the Region. The Minister is bound by their position description, which can change as time goes on, with the approval and input of M&P, the Board and the Congregation in their varying capacities. If the position description changes dramatically, or in terms of number of hours, permission is needed from Region 15. All of these bodies are accountable to and in relationship with God.



The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

Regional Council 15
21 Wright Street, Sackville, NB E4L 4P8
Tel: (800) 268-3781 ext. 6142 • Email: info4rc15@united-church.ca

June 17, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

Re: Canada's response to Israel's threat to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territory

Greetings. We pray that you and your colleagues are well and safe in these challenging times.

I am writing on behalf of Region 15 of The United Church of Canada. We include the province of Nova Scotia and the country of Bermuda. The United Church has a history of supporting work towards a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land. Toward that end, we support and work with Palestinian and Israeli partners who nonviolently work towards a just and lasting peace. We thank you for the vote by Canada in December 2019 at the UN General Assembly that supported Palestinians' right to self-determination.

We also want to thank you for the stand you took and shared with Canadians on June 2, 2020 denouncing the new Israeli government's plan to vote in the Knesset (likely July 1st) on annexing a significant part of the occupied Palestinian territories. Even though the European Union spoke out much earlier and used much stronger language, we were relieved to hear you uphold the existing Canadian policy in support of the two-state solution as the way towards a just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis.

As you are aware, the Israeli plan to annex Palestinian territory constitutes a grave breach of international law, specifically Article 147 of the IV Geneva Convention, prohibiting the appropriation of property. Such annexation of Palestinian land is aligned with and supported by the Trump Administration's proposed "peace plan" that has been condemned by many countries for being far too generous toward Israel and taking far too much away from Palestine. Both annexation and the Trump-plan crush any possibility for peace and undermine the chance for the two-state solution within a final status agreement.

It is extremely important for Canadians to be firmly on the side of international law and human rights for all people. As human rights and international law are allowed to erode to the detriment of more and more people, our own human and legal rights erode.

...2

Israel has committed and continues to commit numerous violations of Palestinian human rights according to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Any state — even the state of Israel — must be held accountable for its

actions against the human rights of others and against international law. The longer they are allowed to act with impunity, all of us and our values of human life and democracy suffer.

Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations have urgently called on the international community to condemn the proposed annexation. Palestinian Christian leaders, in KAIROS Palestine, have said, "Clear decisions are already taken by the UN. So why further waiting to apply what is already decided?" Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem is asking, "How can the rule of law have any meaning when it is determined, interpreted and applied in accordance with the interests of those who control and oppress their subjects with the intention of perpetuating their rule by means of this same 'law'?" The Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Holy Land Churches urge the government of Israel to restrain from unilateral annexation plans which would surely bring about the loss of any remaining hope for the success of a peace process.

We are aware that 58 former diplomats and Liberal Cabinet Ministers have pointed out, "Territorial conquest and annexation are notorious for contributing to fateful results: war, political instability, economic ruin, systematic discrimination and human suffering."

Again, we thank you for publicly denouncing the Israeli annexation plan and we further call on the government of Canada to:

- o publicly oppose the United States administration's "Peace and Prosperity Plan", announced January 28, 2020, which explicitly supports this illegal annexation plan;
- o work with the European Union and like-minded allies to take all diplomatic and political actions available to hold the government of Israel accountable for violations of international law, including annexation of any and all parts of the occupied Palestinian territories;
- take all diplomatic and political actions available to enforce the rule of law without exception regarding violations of international law;
- o appoint a special envoy to investigate human rights abuses against children in Palestine and Israel, and
- protect the human rights of Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, and to resist occupation and annexation.

It is our prayer that Canada will choose to be a nation that does not remain silent in the face of illegal actions, but will work alongside other nations to uphold human rights and international law. We look forward to Canada's prompt response to our deep concerns about this urgent issue.

In faith,



Janet M. So Janet M. Sollows
President, Regional Council 15

cc: (Attached) via email



Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister, Regional Council 15

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Re: Canada must strongly oppose Israel's annexation of occupied Palestinian territory

Allowing Israel to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territory would:

- Violate international law – specifically Article 147 of the IV Geneva Convention;
- Contribute to political instability and great human suffering;
- Be permanent, not temporary;
- Undermine and finally end any prospects of a future two state solution – and Palestinians' long standing hopes and preparations for self determination;
- Be against Canada's stated policy in support of a two state solution as the way towards a just and lasting peace;
- Further escalate and radicalize relationships between Israelis and Palestinians;
- Set off a process of Palestinian dispossession and Israeli development of the area annexed;
- Lead to the massive expropriation of Palestinian land and property and the expulsion of individuals, families and communities from the annexed areas;
- Make any Palestinian villages and communities remaining in the annexed area 'illegal aliens' in Israel and subject to expulsion;
- Empower the settlers' local governments;
- Give the green light to the remainder of U.S. President Donald Trump's Mideast peace plan which does not include Palestinian control over the movement of people or goods to/from its area or its airspace, its zoning/planning, or the ability to join international organizations or sign international agreements.

Canada must be firmly on the side of international law and human rights for all people. It must enforce the rule of law without exception. As human rights and international law are allowed to erode, our own human and legal rights erode. Any state – even the state of Israel – must be held accountable for its actions. The longer they are allowed to act with impunity, the more all of us and our values of human life and democracy suffer.

Canada must take an immediate, principled and legal position against Israel's intention to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian territories - before it is too late. Many justice seeking and peace loving Canadians are watching Canada's actions.

Sincerely,

POSITION DESCRIPTION

MINISTER OF, WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

Primary Role

This position is considered interim until such time as the Community of Faith Profile Team recommendations are acted upon by the Woodlawn Council and Congregation.

The Minister of Worship and Sacraments will work closely with the Minister of Pastoral Care in developing and leading worship at Woodlawn. Leading Worship will be a shared responsibility.

This position participates regularly in worship and sacramental leadership. Given the experiences during the COVID 19 lockdown and restrictions this position must demonstrate knowledge and willingness to develop on-line programming as part of our worship offerings.

The Minister of Worship and Sacraments in the course of their normal duties and as the opportunities present themselves to develop a relationship with the congregation by getting to know congregants through participating in structured and unstructured fellowship opportunities. Given Public Health restrictions on gatherings this will require creativity and a willingness to develop and work within new paradigms.

Secondary Role

The Minister of Worship and Sacraments works collegially with the Ministry team and lay members of the congregation to build a strong, responsive, and compassionate pastoral ministry.

Pastoral Care is a priority at Woodlawn for all segments of our congregation while the Minister of Pastoral Care will have the primary responsibility for this aspect of Woodlawn's Ministry and for coordinating leadership around this Ministry for the Ministry Team and lay members of the pastoral care committee each member of the ministerial team is expected to share this important ministry.

In close cooperation with the other members of the Ministry Team develop and offer programs, activities and services that nurture and promote spiritual growth within the congregation.

The Minister of Worship and Sacraments participates and coordinates with other staff members and lay volunteers through participation in staff meetings. Administrative issues and functions will primarily be the responsibility of the Administrative Assistant working in close cooperation with a volunteer support team appointed by Council. However, there will be times when input and support will be required by this position. **Responsibilities**

Congregational development (15%)

- Participates as a member of the staff team in internal staff meetings
- Contributes to positive communications among staff and with the congregation and participates in regular reports to Council.
- Actively represents Woodlawn United Church to the external community

Ministry of Word and Sacrament (45%)

- With a significant online and small group focus, plans services of worship, including alternative worship programs
- Trains and supports worship volunteers

- Prepares and delivers sermons
- Conducts, and participates in, the sacraments, weddings, and funerals
- Leads the program leading to the Sacrament of Baptism
- Oversees the marriage preparation process

Community building, program development, and teaching (20%)

- Develops new member ministry programs
- Develops and leads adult Christian Education programs through creative use of time and space maximizing all opportunities for fellowship
- Develops small group ministries
- Participates in baptismal, marriage, and confirmation preparation **Pastoral Care (20%)**
- Participates in hospital and home visitation as well as grief and spiritual counseling in consultation with the Minister of Pastoral Care

General

As part of the ministry team this position may be called upon to provide spiritual leadership and supervision of the Youth Coordinator position.

From time to time each member of the Ministerial Team will be expected to attend to the duties and responsibilities of other members of the team who may be ill, on vacation, sick leave, study leave etc.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Youth Coordinator 20-30 hours per week

Primary Role

This position is considered interim until such time as the Community of Faith Profile Team recommendations are acted upon by the Woodlawn Council and Congregation.

The Youth Coordinator plans and implements elements of a ministry that seeks to help the children and youth of Woodlawn United Church (WUC) make steps on their journey in faith.

The Youth Coordinator organizes and oversees the implementation of program activities that are designed to guide the youth through various life and spiritual issues facing them.

The Youth Coordinator establishes and fosters relationships with the young people in the congregation as well as between young people and the rest of the congregation.

The Youth Coordinator encourages the youth to continue building their relationship with God, using Jesus as the lens through which Christians know God best.

The Youth Coordinator helps to establish an environment that provides a safe, nurturing and fun place for our young people to grow in self, friendship, faith and community.

The Youth Coordinator will have direct and frequent interaction with the ordained members of the ministry team who will assist and where appropriate provide leadership and supervision to the Youth Coordinator

Secondary Role

The Youth Coordinator works as part of the Ministry Team in the development of the pastoral charge with a focus on Youth and Young Adults.

The Youth Coordinator participates with the Ministry team to develop programs and activities that nurture and promote spiritual growth with an emphasis on Youth.

The Youth Coordinator participates and coordinates activities with the ministry team through regular consultations with the Youth team and through staff meetings.

Responsibilities

Committee Work (15 %) (3 hrs weekly)

- Assists the Christian Development (CD) and Youth Team, Sunday School, Youth and Young Adult programming.
- Sits on the Volunteer Screening Policy Implementation Committee (VSPIC) to ensure the proper policies are in place and followed to protect our most vulnerable populations.
- Participates in the ongoing recruitment of volunteers and formation of leadership teams as it relates to Youth Programming.

Development, direction and implementation of the Sunday School program (20 %) (4hrs weekly)

- Provides input to the CD committee and the superintendent in terms of recruitment needs for volunteers and Sunday School teachers
- Develops and coordinates with Sunday School superintendent the Sunday School program to ensure theological content is strong, age appropriate and keeping within the United Church Theology
- Stays current with emerging models and experiences of other churches
- Reviews materials and supplies and purchasing new supplies as they are needed.

Development and implementation of programs for youth (55 %) (11hrs weekly)

- Stays current with latest models of youth ministry
- Leads regular gatherings of youth through face to face sessions or online sessions as the rules for group gatherings are dictated by public health regulations
- Provides spiritual formation in creative and cooperative ways
- Develops and maintains regular contact and support for all youth
- Develops and delivers age appropriate programs for young teens and young adults
- Champions our young people's ministry to the congregation.
- Updates members of the congregation on youth programs and needs through bulletins, E-mails, and announcements at Sunday worship services
- Develops and plans spiritual events in addition to Sunday AM Youth group

Facilitating the involvement of children, youth, and young adults in the Sunday worship services (10%) (2hrs weekly)

- Supports and encourages the young people to share their talents with the wider congregation i.e. singing, lay readers, collecting the offering.
- Develops worship services for participation and leadership by the Sunday School (i.e. White Gift, Christmas Eve, and Children's Day).

The assumptions above do not assume every week will be the same and as such the distribution will vary from week to week. However, it is expected over the term the distribution should be close to the allocations shown.

Administration:

Where appropriate and necessary the Youth Coordinator may attend CD, Youth Team and Council to assist and or report on Youth activities and program development.

Knowledge, Abilities, Skills and Personal Suitability

Knowledge of UCC doctrine and theology

Strong spiritual, Christian faith

Skilled in the use of social media (facebook, twitter and other emerging tools)

Good communicator

Open and inclusive

Relatable and Reliable

Fun to be with

Open to new ideas and concepts

Transition Team Report

The Ad Hoc Committee on reopening of Woodlawn facilities have held one Zoom meeting and have otherwise conducted business by e-mail to this point. In addition to interaction of the committee members, Church staff (office and clergy) have been informed and consulted in the development of our work to this point. The attached proposal outlines how we have proceeded to date and our recommendation to Council as to how subsequent work should proceed. As per the attached proposal, we have proceeded to identify 9 foundational documents for this work as follows:

1. The Bible
2. Covid 19 Public health directives for NS
3. Gathering restrictions*
4. Re-entry through Covid - 19 NS & Bermuda
5. United church policy
6. As we begin to reopen (Region 15)

7. Covid-19 relaunch guidance places of worship
8. Woodlawn United church Insurance policies
9. Woodlawn united church facilities related policies

Should Council approve our proposal and selection of foundational documents, the committee will move quickly to complete the development of a terms of reference as described.

Allan Eddy
Attachments area

AD Hoc Committee (AHC) on Woodlawn Reopening Protocols Proposal

Mandate;

The AHC's primary focus will be to establish a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the use by the pertinent existing committees within Woodlawn's governance structure in the development of protocols and plans for the reopening and use of the physical facilities of Woodlawn United Church, in the context of the Covid pandemic.

Overview:

The work of the AHC will be conducted via E-mail and zoom meetings. Meetings will be kept to a minimum with an opening meeting on May 28 and one meeting to review and approve a final draft TOR to be recommended to Council. Unless otherwise preferred by the AHC, the Chair will assume the responsibility for creating drafts for review and incorporating edits from AHC members.

The AHC will identify key documentation which will form the foundational references within the TOR. Once agreement has been reached on which documents are to be used, a draft TOR for reopening plans/protocols will be developed by the Chair which will be iteratively circulated to the AHC for review and editing in the context of the agreed reference documents.

Once the AHC has an agreed upon TOR it will be sent to Council for review and approval. Once approved, the Council will then engage with the various committees of our governance structure to have them provide their expertise in their area of responsibility. For example, the worship committee would be asked to put a plan together around worship that fit the larger terms of reference, this would then be built on by taking it to the Music committee to ask them to create plans to address the music program within the worship plan again in the context of the overarching terms of reference. This process would be used for each of the major activities within the church. In particular, the rental committee would be given the overarching terms of reference and asked to draw up a similar document that may be more detailed which they could provide to each of the rental groups as a framework for them to develop their own tailor made plans for their groups. Once the rental committees document was approved by Council, they would then have the responsibility and authority to approve any individual renter's plan that met these terms of reference.

The Council may ask the AHC to provide input if it has questions/concerns with the application of the TOR to specific plans or protocols.

The Five Ws; Who?

Woodlawn Church Council is the approval authority for the TOR and any subsequent plans and protocols that are developed within the approved TOR for the reopening and use of the physical facilities of Woodlawn United Church. Council may at its discretion and as appropriate delegate approval authority for plans or protocols to existing committees within the governance structure.

The intended audience for the TOR is the Council and Committees of Council. The audience for specific plans and protocols that are subsequently developed in accordance with the TOR will be the Congregation, mid - week groups and rental organizations.

What?

The TOR will provide the framework and basic requirements that must be met by any plans or protocols that are developed to facilitate the reopening and use of Woodlawn United physical facilities in the context of the Covid Pandemic. Council and/or Committees will use the TOR as the basis for decision making and/approval around the adequacy of any proposed plans or protocols.

The TOR will be composed of the terms agreed to by the AHC and approved by Council as well as the foundational reference documents identified by the AHC

Where?

The TOR will apply to all plans and protocols for activities within the physical facilities of Woodlawn United Church. Council may choose to use the TOR if they are required to approve formal activities involving Woodlawn staff and/or congregants in facilities outside of Woodlawn United

Why?

The TOR is intended as an enabling document to allow for a common approach and a broad participation of the Woodlawn United governance structure in the developing of plans and protocols for the reopening and ongoing use of the physical facilities by establishing a common understanding of requirement and thereby minimizing effort and differences of opinion.

When?

The TOR shall be in effect once approved by Council until such time as all Public health orders associated with the Covid pandemic have been lifted or such time as Council agrees to modify the TOR or have it lapse.

The ADC will strive to have a draft TOR to Council for review by June 1, 2020.

RE-OPENING CHURCHES DURING COVID-19

Safety Considerations for Reopening during the Pandemic

Updates will be offered as the situation develops.

As of May 7, 2020

Over the past several weeks, we have learned so much about what it means to be church and how many ways there are to be church without gathering in person or making full use of our church buildings. Even as we do these things, we yearn for the time when we will be back together in community.

This page is intended to assist those responsible for making decisions in all parts of the church. **It is not a directive but is offered as guidance.** Updates will be offered as the situation develops, and your input is welcome.

The Big Picture

- The safety of staff, volunteers, church members, and all those we serve needs to guide our decisions about reopening any activities.
- It is likely that COVID-19 will continue to affect the ways we behave and the activities we take part in for at least the next year.
- Common guiding principles will be decided cooperatively by senior General Council and regional council staff. Regional councils and local communities of faith will implement these principles, bearing in mind regional and local variations in circumstances.
- Decisions about larger denomination-wide events will be made by the General Council Executive or senior leadership.

Public Health Directives and Gradual Reopening

- It is important to keep up to date on all government and public health directives and guidelines, and to adhere to them.
- Simply adhering to these directives and guidelines may not be enough. We need to keep in mind our context, including the types of activities we host, and the age and health demographics (health vulnerabilities) of participants.
- Do **not** look for ways to get around or bend the public health directives and guidelines. We need to work within both the rule and the spirit in which they are given.
- Although many things are not clear, one that is clear is that the return will not happen all at once. As with the general return in our communities, plan on a staged renewal of activities and with the adaptations necessary to protect safety. Consider “hybrid” plans: ones that allow for face-to-face gathering where it is necessary, but using distance gatherings (conference calling, online, etc.) where possible.
- In the various government plans being released across the country, moving to the next step depends on continued assessment of the progress of containing COVID-19. If a levelling off of new cases is followed by another wave, the movement toward reopening will be slowed down. The church needs to pay attention to these same considerations.
- Things may look different for a while or for a long while. Some things may even look different permanently, as there have been learnings from this pandemic time that we will want to remember later.

Each community of faith should consider having a COVID-19 Reopening Committee that works with the governing body about actions specific to your pastoral charge and the regional council.

Moving through the Phases

Some considerations for your governing body and Reopening Committee to think about before moving from one phase to another. You may need to give specific instructions or do certain things to help people understand that they will need to do some things differently when they first return to worshipping or otherwise gathering in the church building.

- What extra cleaning practices need to be implemented?
- What changes will you make in worship practices?
- How will you discourage hand-shaking or other physical contact?
- Do you hold a “coffee hour,” and if so what does it look like, and then when to reopen gatherings with food?
- What protocols are needed for rental groups, and how will you work or communicate with them on these protocols?
- **Will your practices on “return” be acceptable to your insurer?**
- Having done things so differently during this time, what of the “differently” is there merit in continuing?
- If you moved study groups or daily devotionals online and liked it, is it sustainable in terms of ministry personnel time to continue to do it the new way and pick up how you had been doing it?

Phase 1: Reopening the Building during the Pandemic

Small groups may be in the building. Worship is still online only, with some exceptions for outdoor worship.

The Building

- Church boards, committees, or staff groups may meet in person in small numbers, respecting local restrictions, and with social distancing and masks.
- Churches need to have an opening plan that spells out the provisions for safe opening. They should require the same of their tenants before allowing them back.

Worship Guidelines

Generally, worship will continue to be held online only, although some exceptions may be made for outdoor worship with social distancing and masks.

Communion

If communion is offered, best practices suggest the following:

- The officiant and servers use hand sanitizer before offering communion.
- Individual pieces of bread and individual cups are offered.
- Servers offer the bread and cup to each person, rather than each person taking them from a communal plate or tray.
- Each communicant places their empty cup into a separate receptacle.

Passing the Peace and the Offering Plate

Social distancing must be maintained. Offering a phrase or pressing hands together in a prayerful bow can convey the message of passing the peace.

- Passing the offering plate should be avoided. Place the plate in the church for people to drop their offering into, and have gloves available for staff handling cash or cheques. Now is the time to suggest that people [give through PAR](#).

Singing

- There should be no congregational or choir singing.
- Soloists must be at safe distances from each other and from the congregation.

Source: [A Conversation: What Do Science and Data Say About the Near Term Future of Singing](#) webinar recording [May 5, 2020].

Cleaning

After each gathering, it is important to thoroughly clean bathrooms, door handles, hymnbooks, pew Bibles, backs of pews, microphones, musical instruments, and all other highly used areas.

Over 60 or Otherwise Vulnerable?

- People over 60, those with underlying medical conditions that have weakened immune systems, and those who have family members at home who are vulnerable are encouraged to participate only in online activities.
- Clergy who are in one of these categories should have a conversation with their Ministry and Personnel Committee to develop an alternate option where exposure to groups of people is limited and high-risk activities are avoided altogether.
- Ministry personnel who are at higher risk or who have family members at home who are at higher risk must exercise diligence in limiting their exposure to groups of people and higher-risk activities

Phase 2: Reopening In-Person Worship during the Pandemic

Worship and other activities resume in church buildings, with social distancing and other measures.

Masks, Social Distancing, and Limited Singing

- In-person worship could resume in church buildings where space allows social distancing, adhering to public health directives and allowable numbers. Masks may be worn.
- Only soloists can sing, appropriately distant from congregants, because singing by congregants can cause droplets to spread farther.
- Even after resuming in-person worship, online versions should continue to be available for those in high-risk categories who need to continue to avoid group activities.

Weddings, Baptisms, and Funerals

Small funerals, weddings, and baptisms may be held within local restrictions about numbers.

- Infant baptism: The parents/guardians of the child should be the only ones to hold them. The officiant will need to sanitize their hands before each baptism.

- Child and adult baptism: Water should come from individual cups or a bottle for each person, not the common font.

Administration and Maintenance

Maintenance and administration functions resume more fully, but with provisions for social distancing. These might include such measures as alternating times for staff to be present in the office.

- Tenant use of church buildings may be staged back in, depending on the types of activities and the ability to implement appropriate safety protocols.
- Deep cleaning needs to be done after every gathering.

Phase 3: Full Return during the Pandemic

For worship and other gatherings, you will still need to consider the health and safety regulations of your province.

Worship and Gatherings

Worship services with people in attendance, in-person small groups, and in-person gatherings of all kinds may not be possible until a vaccine is developed and generally available. However, if public health directives say worship can resume fully, people may still want the option of distancing in the sanctuary and wearing masks.

For gatherings including coffee hour and congregational dinners as well as fundraisers with food preparation, you will need to consider all of the health and safety regulations for the province in this time of COVID-19 recovery.

Don't Forget Your Online Members

The ability to participate online may continue to be important for people in vulnerable categories. Many church members and regular participants may be from vulnerable categories.

Each council makes decisions on reopening for its areas of responsibility. The governing board of each community of faith should consult with its local public health unit, provincial health ministry, and regional council. The guiding principle is the safety of all who enter the building.

Gathering restrictions

Nova Scotia has restricted gatherings to protect Nova Scotians' health and limit the spread of COVID-19. A gathering is any event that brings people together in a single space at the same time. Nova Scotians are not allowed to gather in groups of more than 5, unless their group has an exemption.

All Nova Scotians need to follow [social distancing guidelines](#) to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of getting sick.

Social distancing guidelines

Nova Scotians need to follow social distancing guidelines to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This means limiting your contact with other people and staying 2 metres (6 feet) away from them.

You're not allowed to gather in groups of more than 5 people, [unless your group has an exemption](#).

To protect yourself and others you need to:

- only gather in groups of less than 5 people, [unless your group has an exemption](#)
- stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from people that aren't in your family household bubble
- limit your contact with other people
- keep your social circle small

- make informed choices about who and how to interact with each other (consider age, occupation and health conditions)
- be careful about your social interactions and how often you leave home

Exemptions to the 5-person or less gathering limit

Exemptions to limit gatherings to no more than 5 people include:

- [businesses and organizations not required to close](#)
- households with more than 5 people
- [outdoor activities](#)
- [family household bubbles](#)
- [drive-in religious services](#)

Religious services

Religious groups should consider holding services virtually (online or through community TV). They can also hold outdoor “drive-in” services if they follow social distancing requirements, including:

- staff must be present to make sure everyone is following the restrictions
- vehicles must be parked 2 metres (6 feet) apart in the parking lot, with the engine turned off
- only people from 1 household unit should be in each car
- everyone must stay in their car through the entire service
- the building, including washrooms, must stay closed to the congregation
- microphones can't be shared between staff
- nothing can be passed out to the congregation (like books, programs, food, beverages and collection plates)
- people can't exchange items between cars

Regional Council 15 – (NS and Bermuda) Relaunching Guidelines - In Person Ministry

The thought of returning to in person worship in our churches, is both exciting and scary. We are all doing our best to navigate these uncharted waters with guidance from our health and government officials. We need to celebrate how resilient we have all been through this pandemic. The slow and gentle reopening of our communities, businesses, and churches will be more difficult than the closing down. We will all need to be very diligent about keeping one another safe. This time can also cause stress, anxiety and conflict, as there will be many voices with many opinions with what needs to happen and what should not happen in our attempts to relaunch our in person ministries. Some will wish to move quickly; others will be cautious. Some are confident in their good health and other are at risk because of age and/or medical conditions. We are tired and these next steps will take much energy. Let us remember to be caring and generous in spirit with one another to hang together and make adaptive decisions for the good of all.

In March, we were called out of our churches to service God's people in a different way. As we begin to wonder about and plan for our return to our spiritual homes, we know that it cannot be church as usual, but must be church in the new normal. As we begin to develop our plans for reopening let us remember, as followers of Christ we called

to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is in that spirit that we must develop our plan to return to in person worship and opening our buildings once again as symbols of Faith, Hope, Justice and Love.

Trauma Informed

Some churches/families will have had members die during the lockdown phase. Some will have had funerals take place that were far from normal others may have been prevented from attending the funeral. Many will still be waiting for arrangements to be made. Be aware that some people will have become vulnerable during the weeks of physical distancing, because of physical and mental health issues, financial hardships, strained relationships, abuse, and some may have had triggers of past traumatic experiences.

Be cautious about expressing thanksgiving when you can return to your buildings, because some will be acutely aware of loss or may be fearful about returning. Give attention to this and seek healing for all who are hurting, and reconciliation wherever that is possible. Be conscious that different people will need different approaches and take different amounts of time to begin to recover from the trauma they have experienced.

Looking Forward in Faith

In Nova Scotia, Dr. Strang reminded us of the right to worship versus the responsibility to help prevent spread and protect the vulnerable. We are reminded that re-entry into our churches will be a slow process and we all have a responsibility to stay informed, be prepared, and follow the public health advisories. We must follow the regulations from our health care and government authorities as they begin to relax restrictions. To help our churches to put together their plan to help ensure adequate preventative measures are in place, we have provided these guidelines as a tool to prepare for reopening. Each church is asked to have a reopening committee. If you have a small community of faith, your governing body can be your committee. It is likely that this virus will continue to affect our behaviour and activities for a long time to come. Having a committee that can seek guidance, create a plan and make recommendations to the governing body will be a vital part of our reopening. *Each community of faith will need to make a plan that fits with their needs, taking into consideration the activities you have and the demographic of your community. We offer the following to help you develop a unique plan for your community of faith. Each plan will be different and may need to change depending on the directions from our health care authorities. We may also have to put a plan in place in case we experience a second wave and have to limit activities.*

Faithful Discernment and Suggestion of a Plan

The safety of staff, volunteers, church members, and all those we serve needs to be at the center of our decision making. Some questions to help you engage in discussion about the faith, principles and values that underlay our decision:

- What is the need we are trying to respond to, if we reopen?
- Does our decision to meet in person serve that need in a way that is faithful? Is a fear of losing members, money or conflict factoring into decision-making?
- Does the risk of illness outweigh the benefit of gathering?
- What is the impact of our decision on vulnerable members? (gathering in a way that leaves our vulnerable members out might be just as harmful as not gathering)
- What will we not be able to have for some time: gatherings with food, coffee hour? Potlucks?
- What shall we do differently, and how shall we live differently as we work through the pandemic and emerge in this new season?
- Where are the signs of hope?

Current - Churches (Government of NS)

Currently, our churches are encouraged to continue holding services virtually (online or through community TV). Churches can also hold:

- Outdoor “drive-in” services, if the social distancing requirements are being followed
- Staff must be present to make sure everyone is following the restrictions
- Vehicles must be parked 2 meters apart in the parking lot, with the engine off
- Only people from one (1) household unit should be in each car
- Everyone must stay in the car through the entire service
- The buildings, including washrooms, must stay closed to the congregation
- Microphones cannot be shared between staff
- Nothing can be passed out to the congregation (like books, programs, food, collection plates)
- People cannot exchange items between cars
- Gatherings can take place with no more than ten (10) people indoors and ten (10) people outside; this includes religious gatherings (*excluding the person conducting the ceremony*)
- In the case of funerals and weddings, permission is given to have fifteen (15) people plus the officiant outside only (*excluding the person conducting the ceremony*).
- For our Camping ministries, overnight camping is cancelled for 2020.

Current - Churches (May 28 to June 30 Government of Bermuda)

- Church services (buildings) are closed
- Private Prayer – members of the clergy shall be permitted to enter the church with appropriate social distancing for private prayer with a maximum of five persons
- In order to broadcast services via electronic means a maximum of ten (10) persons are permitted with strict physical distancing
- Outdoor weddings and funerals may take place to a maximum of twenty (20) people plus the officiant and funeral home staff

Funerals (indoors and graveside), and viewing of the deceased, are permitted with a maximum of ten (10) indoors plus the officiant and funeral home staff.

- Weddings indoors are permitted with a maximum of ten (10) people indoors, including parties, the Registrar General, marriage officer or domestic partnership offices, witnesses, photographer and others in attendance.
- People must wear masks and must adhere to physical distancing.

Regional Council 15 Recommended Guidelines (NS and Bermuda)

- Worship continue to be held online (or by telephone or by dropping of services in mailboxes) however if you have been conducting services that work for your community of faith, continue with that practice. Where it can be done safely and in accordance with local law/public health directions, a small number of people may go into the church to record or stream services. In those situations, everyone should stay at least two meters apart. Singing is known to be more dangerous than talking, and therefore you will need to ensure that any soloist needs to be a very safe distance apart (the science varies and the minimum distance should be at least 15ft). Aerosol droplets can remain in the air for some hours and may be dangerous. If you are using microphones, only one person per mic and each mic must be disinfected after use.
- Once the service is recorded, all areas used by the recording team needs to be cleaned. (for example, the church’s pulpit, lectern, musical equipment used, door handles)
- Bible study, small groups, and other activities should continue to be online.

- Community ministries must operate within local guidelines and as safely as possible, adapting the services provided as necessary, recognizing that their inherent risks involved in providing these frontline services.
- Burials and weddings need to adhere to the public health directives (10) people plus the officiant inside and fifteen (15) people plus the officiant outside. Others brought into the service with online technology. At all times physical distancing needs to be in place. (*Bermuda Please see above*) □ For any service inside, disinfectant cleaning must happen after each event.
- Baptisms need to be postponed until it is safe to do so.
- Reminder: as Ministry Personnel, you will need to make sure you protect yourself and not cross contaminate when part of the liturgy. (For example wedding: blessings of the rings and signing of the documents, do not pass the rings back and forth, and make sure you use your own pen for signing documents. Funerals: no hugging or touching the hand of family members)
- ***It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in these small gatherings where numbers go over the limits.***
- Members of the same family may sit together but others must physical distance.
- Pastoral care is provided by phone or videoconference, or if (rarely) in person, respecting social distancing requirements as well as the institutions regulations, and with all appropriate precautions. aintenance and cleaning activities in the church building are limited to what can be done safely and within local restrictions.
- Administration, if you can work from home you should continue working from home.

LOOKING AHEAD

While we do not have the directive for after this current stage for either NS or Bermuda, we must remember that we are far away from a business as usual and back to "Normal" way of life and church.

Our Health care authorities have advised us that we are in a place of the New Normal: Living with COVID19 and will be for the next one (1) to two (2) years.

We can assume that in the next stage places of worship will begin to be permitted to resume operations with restrictions (we do not currently have the restrictions). The Department/Ministry of Health will provide guidance when it is safe to move into the next stage/phase. Remember, just because we can does not mean we should. The following are guidelines to help you manage a slow and careful return.

Regional Council - First Steps (Take the re-entry slowly)

- Your ability to resume activities will depend on the size of your congregation and your ability to physically distance. Churches could continue offering online worship services, along with bible studies and other groups.
- Funerals need to adhere to public health directives keeping the restricted number of people with attendees maintaining physical distancing. You could consider asking people to wear masks (Bermuda masks are required). It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in funerals where numbers go over the limits, or participants are refusing to social distance.
- If weddings are planned during this time, they need to adhere to public health directives, keeping the restricted number of people with attendees maintaining physical distancing. You could consider asking people to where masks (Bermuda masks are required). It is within a Ministry Personnel's authority (and responsibility) to refuse to participate in weddings where numbers go over the limits.
- Church offices may consider opening, especially where there are small staff components.

- Church boards, committees, or staff groups may meet in person in small numbers, respecting local restrictions, and with physical distancing. You may also consider asking people to wear masks

Regional Council 15 - Second Steps

(When you feel ready, you are encouraged to move at your own pace)

- Your ability to resume activities will depend on the size of your congregation and your ability to physically distance. Churches could continue offering online worship services, along with bible studies and other groups. In person worship could resume in the church buildings where space allows for physical distancing, adhering to public health directives and allowable numbers. You may ask attendants to wear masks.
- ***Singing by the congregation and the choir must be avoided.***
Communal singing poses serious risks! *Scientific evidence shows that the forceful breathing action of singing disperses the plume of aerosolized droplets from a singer's mouth much further than six feet. Public health officials have said that masks cannot completely contain such forcefully expelled mist. Tests have proven that microscopic 'droplet nuclei' that can contain the virus remain suspended in the air for up to 3 hours.*
- Small funerals, weddings, and baptisms may be held within local restrictions about numbers, with physical distancing.

Even with the resumption of in person worship, online versions could continue to be available especially if numbers do not allow your full congregations to gather or for those in high risk categories who need to continue to avoid group activities.

- Maintenance and administration functions resume more fully, with provisions for physical distancing which might include such measures as alternating times for staff to be present in the office (if necessary)
- Tenant/Rental use of church buildings may be back in operation depending on the types of activities and the ability to implement appropriate safety/cleaning protocols.
- Cleaning with a disinfectant will need to be done after every gathering.

Regional Council 15 – (NS and Bermuda) (The New Normal)

- Full “return” to in person worship, in person groups, in person gatherings of all kinds may not be possible until a vaccine is developed and generally available. The health authorities will confirm if/when we are able to have full return.
- Ability to participate online may continue to be important for persons in vulnerable categories. Many church members and regular participants may be from vulnerable categories.
- Gatherings/fundraisers with food preparation will need to consider all of the health and safety regulations for the Province/Country and the demographic of the event needs to be considered in this time of COVID19 recovery.

Tools to Assist with Re-Entry

As you begin to make your plan, please make sure your minister is included in your planning committee. Their input is very important to the process of reentering our church buildings.

Staffing and the Ministry & Personnel Committee

Ministry and Personnel Committees have a vital role in the reopening of the churches. It is important to have a conversation with each employee. For some of your staff there will be a level of mental fatigue, especially for

those who have worked to keep the Pastoral Charge operational, through worship and pastoral care. With that in mind:

- Meet with all staff – virtually right now
 - Ask how they are doing and how their family is doing
 - Ask how this time has been for them
 - Ask how they are feeling about returning to the office (if applicable) and in-person worship
 - What learnings have they gained, what went well and what was difficult
- Ministry Personnel and Lay Employees who are vulnerable (over 60 or have compromised health) should work with their Ministry and Personnel Committee to develop an alternate option to limit exposure to groups and high-risk activities
- Ministry and Personnel Committees should contact the Regional Minister to come up with a plan for return in-person ministry.

Caring for the Church Building and Hall ○ You should, in your announcement and in you plan, advise any staff or congregants who are symptomatic or have been advised by public health 8-1-1 to report their symptoms, to self-isolate and stay at home.

- It would be wise to post the symptoms so people can see what they are and know how to assess when to stay home. (Fever above 38C, a new cough, or worsening cough, headache, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue, muscle pain, diarrhea, loss of sense of taste, loss of smell and in children, purple markings on the fingers and toes)
- 2 meters will need to be observed where people sit. Churches may need to measure and rope off areas where people cannot sit to maintain physical distancing

For contact tracing (if/when required) for each use of the building, there needs to be a record of:

- Name and phone number of the people who were in the building
- Date and time that the gathering took place
- Purpose for the gathering

After each use of the building cleaning with a disinfectant (like Lysol) will need to happen. Churches are encouraged to make a checklist of the places and items to clean for your worship and meeting space. Some things to consider:

- Public washrooms need to be equipped with hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid soap, paper towels, and garbage containers. Handwashing signs must be posted.
- Thoroughly clean bathrooms with disinfectant – toilets (inside, outside and around the basin) – counters - sinks – taps – paper towel dispensers - door handles. (Have Lysol wipes available in the washrooms and a sign asking people to wipe the taps and door handles as they leave) Make sure the washrooms are cleaned frequently.
- Hymnbooks – pew Bibles ○ Backs of pews ○ Microphones ○ Musical instruments ○ Chairs ○ Tables ○ All door handles ○ All other highly used areas ○ Light switches ○ People need to be aware of the hand sanitizer stations and places where they can wash their hands.
- You may wish to ask staff and congregants to wear a mask when coming to church for any activity.

Worship Guidelines

Communion

- If communion is offered:
 - The officiant and servers must use hand sanitizer before offering communion
 - Individual pieces of bread and individual cups are offered
 - Servers offer the bread and cup to each person rather than each person taking them from a communal plate or tray
 - Each communicant places their empty cup into a separate receptacle
 - Disposable cups should be used

Passing the Peace and the Offering Plate

Physical distancing must be maintained.

- Offering a phrase or pressing hands together in a prayerful bow, a wave, a nod or some non-contact gesture can convey the message of peace
- Encourage people to contribute through online giving, PAR, E-Transfer or posted dated cheques. Passing the offering plate should be avoided. Place the plate in the church for people to drop their offering into, and have gloves available for volunteers handling cash or cheques

Singing

- There should be no congregational or choir singing.
 - Soloists must be at safe distances from each other and from the congregation.
- Communal singing poses serious risks!*** *Scientific evidence shows that the forceful breathing action of singing disperses the plume of aerosolized droplets from a singer's mouth much further than six feet. Public health officials have said that masks cannot completely contain such forcefully expelled mist. Tests have proven that microscopic 'droplet nuclei' that can contain the virus remain suspended in the air for up to 3 hours.*

Special Services Baptisms

- For infant baptism, the parents should be the only ones to hold the baby. The officiant will sanitize hands before the baptism. For infant, child and adult baptism, Water should come from individual cups or a bottle for each person, not the common font. If possible, have a separate bowl that sits in the font for each individual who will be baptized.

Weddings and Funerals

- We will need to follow our government restrictions and if they happen in the church physical distancing will need to be maintained and thorough cleaning right after will need to be followed.

Bishop Karen P. Oliveto of the United Methodist Church:

"I do not want one single case of COVID-19 traced to one of our churches because we did not care for those whom Jesus loves."

Remember that this is a tool to help you with your plan to reenter your church buildings; your Regional Council staff are available for consultation and support.

*Resources from the following are gratefully acknowledged:
Pacific Mountain Regional Council
Government of Nova Scotia
Government of Bermuda
United Reformed Church,*

Link to GUIDANCE FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP – Province of Alberta



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