

# **Hope Continues**

**Westworth United Church Revised Reopening Plan**

**October 2021**

# Revised Reopening Plan

Westworth United Church  
1750 Grosvenor Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3N 0H9  
(204) 489-6974

## Precis:

This document outlines steps in a gradual return to regular services and activities at Westworth United Church. Please consult the original document “Because There is Hope Here” available on the website for more detailed explanations or call a member of the committee. This document was created by the Safe Reopening Ad Hoc Committee and approved for use by the Westworth Council.

For further information contact: Eunice Pratt, Chair of the Safe Reopening Committee.

## Introduction

A year ago, we were all looking forward with hope as we carefully planned the resumption of face-to-face worship, meetings, and gatherings at Westworth. Unfortunately, after just two worship services last September (2020), we were required to close our building again for most activities due to the rapid rise in COVID cases and for the health and safety of our members.

We are now in a position to begin a modified reopening in compliance with the most recent public health orders; direction from the United Church of Canada; and the mission, core values, and policies of Westworth United Church. **Our goal is to minimize the risk of contracting COVID 19 in our building, while acknowledging that even with our best efforts this possibility exists. People should carefully assess their own health status when deciding whether or not to rejoin in-person activities.**

**Conditions can change very quickly as the pandemic continues. Our committee monitors our current situation carefully. Our plan is a “work-in-progress” and adjustments may be necessary, including a return to increased restrictions which will be based on many factors including new public health orders, and data related to COVID spread in Winnipeg as well as the province.**

We have tried to consider all activities taking place in the church. Any exceptions to this document need to be cleared by the Safe Reopening Committee.

## Phase One (March 2020 to SEPTEMBER 2021)

Access to the building has been dramatically reduced with most communication between members of the congregation, meetings, study groups and worship occurring virtually. Staff has had access to the building as required.

## **Phase Two** (beginning September 2021)

**Phase 2** begins the process of reopening the building in a safe, controlled, and gradual manner. Restrictions on participant numbers and building use remain. Many established virtual activities continue. Success of this plan depends upon the commitment, hard work, and diligence of our staff, team members and, most importantly, the congregation.

### **Reopening Plan Implementation**

#### **1. Governance and Decision-Making**

The Safe Reopening Committee was created by the Westworth United Church Council, and reports its findings and recommendations to the Council. The Council makes final decisions on implementation.

The Safe Reopening Committee remains in place for consultation until the pandemic is declared over by the Manitoba government.

#### **2. Communication**

Posted signs placed at designated entrances and throughout the building will assist with self-screening, physical distancing, and personal health protection. Signage also will indicate which areas are not open to the public or have modified use.

Reopening plans are available on the Westworth website and will be explained in the congregational email. Call the Safe Reopening Committee for more information.

#### **3. Safety and Health Precautions** (See Appendices for a quick summary)

General Guidelines for all activities:

1. Pre-arranging for building entry is required and can be done through the office. Keys are limited to staff use on a regular basis and signed-out for rentals or particular church events/groups on a temporary basis.
2. **We require anyone who attends worship or church groups to be 14 days post double vaccination. Exemptions are made for those not able to be vaccinated due to medical conditions or age. All staff have been doubly vaccinated.**
3. All people in the building must wear a mask, with exceptions made for those who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons in which case face shields are accepted, and for children under 5. Extra face masks are available. Staff can remove masks if seated in their offices with no one else in the room.

4. Two-metre distancing between individuals and/or households is required in all areas of the building.
5. Group size is limited by the need for physical distancing. The following room capacities have been established: Parlour 15, Upper Classroom (Nursery) 10, Gym 50, Sunday School Room (Gr 2-5) 18, Sunday School Room (N-1) 7. The Sanctuary has space for 40 to 60 people, depending on group size. These numbers reflect Manitoba guidelines for room capacity based on physical distancing of two metres between households.
6. Several groups are now able to meet concurrently if they are in different areas of the building.
7. No food or beverage preparation will be allowed in the building. An exception is made for staff preparing food for themselves. People may bring their own beverages or prepared snacks.
8. Established procedures including the use of hand sanitizer, responding "No" to the most current government-issued COVID questions, and recording contact information for contact tracing continue.
9. Enhanced cleaning procedures continue.

### **Pre-Registering**

Pre-arrange for all in-person visits as follows:

1. Pre-register for worship services by following the directions included in the weekly congregational email. If necessary, you may call the office to register. All those registering must confirm that they are 14 days post double vaccination or ineligible due to medical condition or age, must answer "no" to the COVID screening questions, and must leave contact information. Requests for hearing devices or wheelchair accommodations can be made. Capacity in the sanctuary is limited by the need to maintain physical distancing. Successful registrants will receive a confirming email prior to Sunday. When maximum numbers for a service are reached, the remainder of people will be placed on a waiting list and given first priority for upcoming services. Names of participants will be kept for contact tracing.
2. For Small Groups, leaders will request space on behalf of their group by calling the office. Details for room usage will be outlined by the Office Administrator. An online system for booking space is being developed.
3. Individual visits must be arranged with the Office Administrator.

People attending small groups or making individual visits will self-administer the COVID questions, and record their contact information at their designated entrance. **Prior to entering they must confirm that they are 14 days post double vaccination.**

**Use of Space**

Visitors should remain in their assigned area, to simplify cleaning and sanitizing procedures.

**Entering the Building**

The building is locked. Prearrange visits with the Office Administrator.

**Cloak Rooms**

Cloak room are closed at this time. Visitors should keep their belongings with them.

**Washrooms**

Only one person at a time may enter the washrooms. Exceptions are made for family members with young children. Please refer to posted signs.

**Cleaning and Sanitization**

Established cleaning procedures will continue.

Group leaders are responsible for sanitizing their groups' assigned space after use. A checklist of surfaces to be sanitized and a kit of supplies will be provided.

**Physical distancing**

Two-metre physical spacing must be maintained while entering, exiting, and during all church gatherings, as well as while as in any social interactions before or after gatherings.

**Wearing of masks is mandatory.**

All those wishing to enter should bring and wear a face mask. Exceptions will be made for children under 5. Those unable to wear a mask for medical reasons can wear a face shield.

**Hand sanitizing upon entering the building is mandatory.****4. Church Groups and Gatherings****(See Appendices for quick summary)**

Group leaders wishing to arrange a meeting will contact the Office Administrator and indicate the meeting date, time, preferred space, and number of confirmed participants. Group leaders will check that **all participants are 14 days post double vaccination**. The Office Administrator will assign space based on availability and distancing guidelines. Entry doors, exit doors and washroom facilities will be assigned. Seating configuration requires two-metre distancing between households. After using a space, group leaders are asked to ensure that the surfaces have been sanitized. A cleaning checklist and cleaning supplies is available in the mini-kitchen off the parlour.

**Please note: An online procedure for room bookings is being discussed. Groups leaders will be informed of this procedure when it becomes available**

## **5. Worship**

**(See Appendices for quick summary)**

### **Online Worship**

Live-streamed worship services will continue to be produced and are accessible through the church website <http://westworth.ca/>

### **Capacity**

Limits are required to maintain physical distancing.

### **Pre-Registering**

Pre-register for worship services by following the directions included in the weekly congregational email. If necessary, people may call the office to register. All those registering must confirm that they are 14 days post double vaccination or ineligible because of medical condition or age, must answer "no" to the COVID screening questions, and must leave contact information. Requests for hearing devices or wheelchair accommodations can be made. Capacity in the sanctuary is limited by the need to maintain physical distancing. Successful registrants will receive a confirming email prior to Sunday. When maximum numbers for a service are reached, the remainder of people will be placed on a waiting list and given first priority for upcoming services. Names of participants will be kept for contact tracing.

Registered participants should call the office to cancel their registration if they become ill or are unable to attend a service thus allowing someone else to attend.

The determination of sanctuary capacity includes ushers and greeters as well pre-registered congregants. Capacity will vary depending on the size of households registering.

The Office Administrator will provide a registration list to the greeters, who will confirm registrations on Sunday mornings. These lists will be kept for contact tracing. The Office Administrator will also keep a waiting list of those who could not be accommodated for a service and give them first priority for future services.

All those assisting with the service must sign-in and follow church guidelines. Depending on when they arrive, signing in may be done at the staff entry or with the greeters.

### **Entering and Seating**

Physical distancing, using hand sanitizer and wearing masks are required. Enter through the outside doors leading to the narthex.

Greeters will confirm registrations, check that there are no changes in people's health status since registering, distribute requested hearing devices, and provide a mask or face shield for anyone without one.

Ushers will direct participants to seats. Participants should take a bulletin for their family from the table in the narthex. Collection should be placed in the donations box secured inside the doors to the sanctuary. One household at a time will enter the sanctuary through the double doors, following direction from the usher. Participants should remain in their assigned seat before and during the service.

If unregistered people arrive, they will be encouraged to leave their name and to call the church first thing on Monday morning, as they will be given priority to attend a future service.

One usher will remain in the narthex during the service in case people arrive late.  
**See Appendices for Ushering and Greeting Instructions.**

### **Seating**

**Two-metre distancing between individuals or households is required.**

Ushers will direct people to their designated seats. Seating arrangement templates are used to accommodate various sized groups.

**See Appendices for template.**

### **Worship Leaders**

The scripture reader will remain on the chancel for the service, sit on the right side, speak from the pulpit, and help with other liturgical responses. The minister will speak from the communion table and sit on the right side, two meters from the reader.

### **Musicians**

Singers, piano, organ, stringed and percussive instrumentalists are allowed but all musicians must wear masks and be physically distanced by two-metres unless they are in the same household. A decision about wind instruments is pending.

### **Singing**

There will be no congregational singing although spoken responses and prayers are allowed.

### **Announcements, Prayer Requests, Milestone Celebrations**

Announcements, prayer requests and notice of milestone celebrations to be included in the service should be emailed to the minister by Thursday.

### **Sermon Copies**

Copies of the sermon will be available on the website or a paper copy can be requested from the office.

**Passing of the Peace**

People will remain seated, turn to each other and bow slightly with hand over heart or in Namaste prayer position, but remain in their place. People are asked to prayerfully offer peace to others around the world.

**Prayer Shawl Blessing**

Shawls will be placed at the front of the sanctuary by the minister prior to the service. After being blessed, they will be taken back to the office.

**Communion**

Prepackaged communion elements will be placed on a table in the narthex for people to take as they enter the sanctuary. At the end of the service, garbage should be brought back to the receptacle in the narthex. Communion will be presented in the old Presbyterian style.

**Exiting**

Leaving through the narthex doors, the minister will speak with congregants on the front steps. In order to avoid congestion, people will be asked to remain seated until the usher indicates that they may leave. Ushers will encourage people to keep moving through the narthex. Participants may visit outside while continuing to wear masks and keeping two-metre distance.

Hearing devices should be returned to an usher.

**Baptism/New Members/Confirmation/Funerals/Weddings**

Protocol for all special services in the church will be in compliance with the most recent public health orders and guidelines from the United Church of Canada. Planning for special services is the responsibility of the minister in consultation with family, the Worship Team and the Safe Re-opening Committee.

**6. Sunday School**

**Register for Sunday School on the website.**

**Sunday School will combine in-person experiences (for youth who are fully vaccinated and children under 12 who are ineligible for vaccination) with a Zoom class for those at home.**

Accommodations will be made for children who attend church with their fully vaccinated parents. Families will need to include their children as they pre-register for worship. All children aged five and over are required to wear a mask. Children will be met by a Sunday School teacher after their family has checked in. They will go to the gym to participate in activities consistent with church safety measures. Children should bring their own water bottle and snacks.



At the end of the service, children will wait with the teacher in the narthex until their parents meet them. Families will exit the building together. (Please note that very young children, and those who do not wish to leave their parents may be included in the worship service in the sanctuary.)

The Nursery will not be open at this time but space in the narthex is available for families with very young children.

## **7. Food and Drink**

There will be no food or beverage preparation in the building, except for staff who may prepare only their own meals and beverages. People may bring their own snacks and beverages for their personal consumption.

## **8. Ventilation**

Sanctuary Windows will remain open during worship for increased airflow, weather permitting.

## **9. Rentals**

Building rentals are now allowed providing that all conditions in the COVID Response Requirements for Rental Groups are met. At this time, all requests are reviewed by the Property Team in consultation with the Safe Reopening Committee. **A copy of these requirements is included in the Appendices.**

## Future Phases of Safe Reopening Plan

Provincial public health orders, the direction of the United Church, and our own experiences with the implementation of our Phase Two will be considered in any changes to current restrictions. **Our plan is a “work-in-progress” and adjustments may be necessary, including a return to increased restrictions.**

## Final Remarks

The Safe Reopening Committee wishes to thank all those who contributed to the creation of this document, including members of the congregation, teams and committees, staff members, the Council, and our minister, Rev. Dr. Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd. Despite necessary restrictions, the valuable work of the church continues: reaching out, celebrating Christian faith, and maintaining and building community.

### *Safe Reopening Ad Hoc Committee*

Eunice Pratt (Chair)  
Karla Farstad  
Diane Riordan  
Teresa Sztaba

Paul Chard  
George Nyman  
Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd

## Appendices

### A. Guidelines for Reopening

**Our goal is to minimize the risk of contracting COVID 19 in our building, while acknowledging that even with our best efforts this possibility exists. People should carefully assess their own health status when deciding whether or not to rejoin in-person activities.**

General Guidelines for all activities:

1. Pre-arranging for building entry is required and can be done through the office. Keys are limited to staff use.
2. **We require anyone who attends worship or church groups to be 14 days post double vaccination. Exemptions will be made for those not able to be vaccinated due to medical conditions or age.**
3. All people in the building must wear a mask, with exceptions made for those who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons and for children under 5. Face masks are available at the church for those who may forget to bring theirs. Staff can remove masks if seated in their offices with no one else in the room.
4. Physical distancing of two-metres between individuals and/or households is required in all areas of the building.
5. Group size is limited by the need for physical distancing. The following room capacities have been established: Parlour 15, Upper Classroom (Nursery) 10, Gym 50, Sunday School Room (Gr 2-5) 18, Sunday School Room (N-1) 7. The Sanctuary has space for 40 to 60 people, depending on group size. These numbers reflect Manitoba guidelines for room capacity based on physical distancing of two-metres between households.
6. Several groups are now able to meet concurrently if they are in different areas of the building.
7. No food or beverage preparation will be allowed in the building. An exception is made for staff preparing food for themselves. People may bring their own beverages or prepared snacks.
8. Established procedures including the use of hand sanitizer, responding “No” to the most current government-issued COVID questions, and recording contact information for contact tracing continue.
9. Washrooms are restricted to one person at a time with the exception of families with young children.
10. Enhanced cleaning procedures continue. Sanitization of rooms after using by small groups is required.

## **B. Guidelines for Registration for Worship Services**

### **In addition to the general guidelines outlined above:**

1. Sanctuary capacity includes ushers and greeters. These names should be given to the Office Administrator by Wednesday at the latest. These people then will be pre-registered as being in the building for worship.
2. Pre-register for worship services by following the directions included in the weekly congregational email. If necessary, people may call the office to register. All those registering must confirm that they are 14 days post double vaccination or ineligible because of medical condition or age, must answer "no" to the COVID screening questions, and must leave contact information. Requests for hearing devices or wheelchair accommodations can be made. Capacity in the sanctuary is limited by the need to maintain physical distancing. Successful registrants will receive a confirming email prior to Sunday. When maximum numbers for a service are reached, the remainder of people will be placed on a waiting list and given first priority for upcoming services. Names of participants will be kept for contact tracing. Registered participants should call the office to cancel their registration if they become ill or are unable to attend a service thus allowing someone else to
3. A completed registration list will be printed and given to the greeters on Sunday to confirm registrations.
4. Enter through the front entrance door (by the narthex) at 1750 Grosvenor Ave.
5. The Registration list, indicating who did attend on Sunday, is kept for 21 days to facilitate contact tracing if necessary. These lists will be kept by the Office Administrator.

## C. Greeting Instructions

### Greeters

- Both greeters will sanitize hands, wear masks and maintain physical distancing of two-metres.
- Arrive at 10:15 for a 10:45 service.

### The first greeter (standing at front door)

- Welcome members of the congregation as they arrive.
- Ask if they have preregistered.
- Ask if there is any change to their health since Friday. (If NO they can enter; if YES, suggest they return home and watch the service on-line.
- Ask them to wear a mask while inside the building. If they do not have a mask, ask them to request one at the sign-in table. If they are medically unable to wear a mask, invite them to request a face shield at the sign-in table.
- Ask them to sanitize hands and to proceed to the sign-in table.

**People may arrive who have not registered. Please inform them that at this time, as we gradually reopen our building, only those who have preregistered may attend the service. Let them know that our services are available online and that if they wish to attend a service in the future, they can either check the congregational email or call the office.**

### The second greeter (seated behind sign-in table)

- Will confirm names on the registration list.
- Will provide a mask or face shield if necessary.
- Will provide the hearing assist device if requested.
- Will direct congregants to an usher.
- Will put completed lists in a sealed envelope and slide it under Office Administrator's door.

**NOTE: One greeter or usher must stay in the narthex during the service to welcome latecomers and monitor the door.**

## **D. Ushering Instructions**

### **Preparing**

- Arrive at 10:15 am for a 10:45 am service (people will start arriving at 10:15).
- Put on mask, sanitize hands, then open sanctuary doors and turn on all lights in sanctuary (switches on back wall). Turn fan off for service.
- Weather permitting, open the sanctuary windows using the stool placed in the *north* west corner of the sanctuary. Sanitize hands.
- Review seating chart and ensure bulletins (regular and large print) have been placed on a table in the narthex.
- If communion is served, ensure individual packets are picked up with bulletin.

### **Welcoming**

- One usher stands just inside the open sanctuary doors. The second usher stands in the aisle by the next available seat at the front of sanctuary.
- The first usher welcomes everyone and ask them to stand two metres apart as they wait to go to their seat.
- As people enter the sanctuary, the first usher indicates the collection box and suggest that it can be used before or after the service, given that offerings will not be collected during the service.
- Ushers will direct people to seats according to the Seating Combinations chart, seating people from the front to the back. (See below for chart)
- If someone would like a cushion, sanitize hands and give it to them.
- Close sanctuary doors at start of service, sanitize hands and remain at back of sanctuary.
- Welcome latecomers quietly and direct to a seat.

### **End of Service**

- At conclusion of service, open sanctuary doors and sanitize hands.
- People will be asked to remain seated until the usher directs people row by row to leave, beginning at the back. Music will be played as people exit.
- Encourage everyone not to linger in narthex, but to continue through the front doors for outdoor visiting.
- Extinguish Christ candle and tea lights with candle snuffer that is under the communion table. Replace finished tea lights with ones from under the communion table. Sanitize hands.
- Turn off lights shortly after service ends to encourage people to visit outside (use switches, not dimmers).
- Close windows.
- Pick up any cushions, bulletins or belongings left behind. Put cushions back on back pews. Leave bulletins and belongings on narthex coffee ledge, then sanitize hands.
- Hang hearing assist devices in the library and put headset controllers back in the recharging box, then sanitize hands.

### E. Seating Combinations Chart

(note that two empty rows must be left between seated pews, as indicated by the green and red tags on the end of each pew)

Each square represents 2 ft

Each X represents 1 person

For 18-foot pews:

X				X				X
X							X	X
X						X	X	X
X					X	X	X	X
X				X	X	X	X	X
X	X						X	X
X	X					X	X	X
X	X				X	X	X	X
X	X	X				X	X	X

For 10-foot pews:

X					X
X	X				
X				X	X

## **F. Guidelines for Church Groups and Gatherings**

(In addition to directions in Guidelines in Reopening the Church Building)

### **The Group Leader**

- Will inform the Office Administrator as to the meeting date, time, room preference and the number of confirmed participants.
- Will check that all participants are 14 days post double vaccination unless ineligible due to medical condition or age.
- Will ensure that participants sign in and out at designated entry door, answering the COVID questions.
- Will ensure physical distancing and masking during the meeting.
- Will ensure that the appropriate sanitizing of the room takes place following the meeting. (See below)

### **The Office Administrator**

- Will assign room(s) on the basis of availability, and current occupancy limits associated with physical distancing guidelines.
- Will assign entry doors, exit doors and washroom facilities to be used by the group.

### **Participants (including group leader)**

- **Will be 14 days post double vaccination with exceptions for those who cannot be vaccinated due to medical or age restrictions**
- Will answer NO to the COVID questions posted at the entry doors.
- Will hand sanitize on entering the church.
- Will wear masks.
- Will sign in and sign out at the entry door.
- Will maintain physical distancing.

### **Small Groups Sanitizing Protocol**

**Supplies needed:** Disposable gloves, sanitizing solution, disinfecting wipes, reusable cloths, found at the sanitizing station in the kitchen beside the parlour.

#### **The sanitizer may cause mild eye irritation. See MSDS**

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on the disposable gloves
- If the surface to be sanitized is dirty, please wash with soap and water first.
- Spray the sanitizer onto surfaces touched by the group including doorknobs, light switches, tables and counters.
- For Lysol disinfecting spray the surfaces should remain wet for at least 30 seconds to be effective. Wipe with the cloths provided.
- For AirX Spray and Go Disinfectant the surface should remain wet for 30 seconds. Wipe with cloths provided.



- For INO-F-SAN-1 sanitizer the surfaces should remain wet for at least 15 seconds to be effective. Wipe with cloths provided.
- For Lysol disinfectant wipes the surface should remain wet for two to five minutes in order to be effective. Dispose of used wipes in the trash.
- Dispose of the cloth in the black bucket at the sanitizing station.
- Remove gloves and dispose in the trash.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer.

## G. COVID Response Requirements for Rental Groups

### Introduction:

COVID Response Requirements for Rental Groups Westworth comply with the latest public health orders and United Church of Canada guidelines, and Westworth United Church policies. All rental groups using Westworth Church must agree to the following. Acceptance of these additions to the regular rental agreement is confirmed by signatures required at the end of this document. **All rental participants must show proof of vaccination or proof of medical exemption, unless ineligible due to age.**

1. All participants must be two weeks post doubly vaccinated. Exceptions are made for those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons as issued by the Manitoba government or due to age restrictions.
2. Room occupancy limits are determined by the most current Manitoba orders for physical distancing and are assigned in accordance.
3. All group leaders must be aware of and adhere to the latest government guidelines.
4. All participants attending the meeting or event will be assigned entrance and exit doors, and washroom facilities. No other doors or facilities should be used by the group. Wearing a mask and hand sanitizing are required.
5. Check-in procedures: The group leader or a designate is required to monitor the entry door, ensuring that all participants show proof of 2 weeks post double vaccination or proof that they are ineligible for vaccination from the government of Manitoba. Each participant must answer "NO" to all of the most current COVID questions posted at the entrance doors each time they attend a meeting of their group. Hand sanitizing upon entry is required. Physical distancing guidelines should be maintained.
6. All participants must register/sign in with contact information. These lists must be kept by the group leader for 21 days to allow for contact tracing should it become necessary. A form for recording this information and responses to the COVID questions is available from the Office Administrator.
7. Participants must stay in the area designated as their rental space.
8. Any tables or chairs used must be spaced to allow for two metres between participants.
9. Face masks are required.

**Due to the changing nature of public health guidelines and of the pandemic itself, it is acknowledged that changing conditions may result in the cancellation of this rental agreement. In the event of cancellation, the rental fee will be refunded, however, Westworth will not be liable for any further compensation related to the impact of the cancellation.**

An additional fee to cover the cost of sanitizing room(s), washrooms and entry/exit spaces used is required. This fee covers the cost of extra custodial time, supplies, etc.

**Consent:**

**I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) representing \_\_\_\_\_ (group) agree to the COVID 19 Guidelines for Rental Groups required by Westworth United Church, as well as payment of an additional fee for sanitizing and cleaning.**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please send a copy of the agreement to the Westworth Office Administrator.**

Room capacities: Parlour 15, Upper Classroom (Nursery) 10, Gym 50, Sunday School Room (Gr 2-5) 18, Sunday School Room (N-1) 7. The Sanctuary has space for 40-60 people depending on groupings. These numbers reflect Manitoba guidelines for room capacity based on physical distancing of 2 meters between households. In some cases, permanently affixed furniture needed to be taken into account, which reduced the total allowable number of participants.)