

Carman United Church, Sydney Mines

Church Reopening Plan Summary, August 2020

Dear friends,

This is a summary report of the reopening plan for Carman United Church, Sydney Mines for your information. If you wish to review the entire 12 page report, you may find it on our website: www.carmanunited.ca. These documents are considered “living documents” in that they will be amended as necessary to reflect the nature of Covid-19 spread in our area, as well as to follow any changes to Public Health protocols. Our plan is to allow you to review these documents and then follow up with a phone call to gather your feedback about reopening our church for public worship.

We have no idea how long we will be living under the shadow of Covid-19, so have not addressed particular dates, but instead have focused on processes and policies. Whatever unfolds over the coming months or years, we seek to do as Jesus says in John 13:34, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” We love each other by taking care of each other and ensuring the safety of those who come to our church.

Below are the areas of concern we want to focus on as we think about reopening our church.

Church Capacity

We are expected to maintain proper social distancing while in public. Measuring our church seating requires us to use every 3rd pew, maintaining space away from the aisles and from the various family “bubbles” that will be spread out around the sanctuary. Taking these requirements into consideration, we estimate we can fit a maximum of 35 people in our sanctuary. This is roughly half of our average Sunday attendance.

Masks

All visitors to Carman will be required to wear a mask. Speakers at the service have the option to mask if they wish while in the pulpit, but will wear a mask at all other times. At this time there will be only one leader for the entire service.

Entering/Exiting the Church

Entrance to the church building will be through the main entrance on Clyde Avenue. All will be screened and have their personal information collected for contact tracing if necessary. Upon entering, you will sanitize your hands and an usher will escort you to your seat where you will remain until the service ends and are directed to leave through the parking lot door. Once outside, you will make your way to your vehicle to make room for the next group to leave behind you. The entering and exiting process will take time, so please arrive early in order to be seated. Doors will open 1 hour before the service begins.

Ushers

We will require a large team of ushers, who will be masked. Ushers will be responsible for the movement of people in and out of the church. We anticipate needing 4-5 ushers per service, and would like a team of roughly 10-12 trained ushers available for scheduling.

Bulletins and Offering Plates

There will be no use of bulletins or offering plates. An enclosed box will be at the entrance for those who wish to drop off envelopes, use of PAR or e-transfers will be strongly encouraged.

The Worship Experience

As much as we would like to worship as we have always done, worship is going to look different for us for some time. While there may be instrumental music, but there will be no congregational singing, no public prayers, no passing of the peace, no handshakes or hugs.

Washroom Facilities

One accessible washroom will be open during the service with signage as to proper cleanliness procedures.

Sanitation

After every service, all used areas of the church must be sanitized. This will take a fair bit of effort, and we will require a large rotating team of volunteers to be trained to do this work.

Sunday School and Nursery

While children are always welcome at Carman, there will be no Sunday School or Nursery provided during the pandemic.

What if someone is infected?

If we are made aware that someone infected with Covid-19 has been in our building, we will work with Public Health openly and provide them with all contact tracing information as well as any other information they may require.

More Information

See the full report for policies on Baptism, Communion, Weddings and Funerals, and other aspects of the church, as well as fuller explanation of the above.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rev. Nick Phillips at 902-736-9233 or any other member of the Church Council (Craig Varnes, Bev Lapare, Grace Jones, Joyce Gardner, Max and Shirley Voutier).

Please join us in prayer as we continue to seek out God's plan in the midst of a rapidly changing world.

God bless you,

Rev. Nick and the Carman United Church Council.