

The Parishes of Waterford and St. Mark

Operational Plan: Green Level of Recovery (December 27, 2021)

Preamble

All parishes in the Diocese of Fredericton are required to have an operational plan that meets or exceeds the minimum requirements for operation according to the guidelines set out by the province of New Brunswick.

The reason for this requirement is simple. Church gatherings, like other community gatherings, increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Even more, they increase the risk of serious infection for a common demographic in many of our parishes. As followers of Jesus and ambassadors of God's kingdom in the world, devoted to love of neighbor and the welfare of our communities and province, we want to do our part in making our church buildings safe for public use. This is precisely what an operational plan based on the provincial guidelines helps us to do.

Below is our operational plan for Level 2 of recovery for the Parishes of Waterford and St. Mark. The plan covers five areas: 1) Leadership Roles and Responsibilities; 2) Guidelines for Indoor Gatherings; 3) Guidelines for Outdoor Gatherings; 4) Communication and Follow Up.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

The parish Rector and Wardens will be responsible for the operational plan and its implementation, ensuring that parish policy conforms to the guidelines of the Province of New Brunswick and the Diocese of Fredericton. The rector will communicate the operational plan to both parishes, safeguard the worship space and organize a schedule of worship. The wardens will recruit, train and schedule volunteers for screening, monitoring, cleaning and disinfecting. They will also safeguard the building and appoint volunteers to supervise as people come and go for worship.

Guidelines for Indoor Gatherings

Below are our guidelines for when we gather in person.

Seating Capacity

We will be limited to 50% seating capacity in all indoor worship spaces

Screening and Monitoring

Rector and parishioners will be screened and monitored at all church gatherings in accordance with the provincial and diocesan guidelines.

- Proof of vaccination will be required and a record kept of those who have provided proof of vaccination.

- Newcomers will be asked for their name and phone number and assurance given that this information will be used solely for public health contact tracing

Facemasks and Physical Distancing

Facemasks will be worn for all indoor gatherings in accordance with provincial and diocesan guidelines (except those leading who are distanced by more than 4 metres).

Hand Hygiene

Proper handwashing will be promoted and facilitated for parishioners and staff in accordance with the provincial and diocesan guidelines.

- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be made available throughout the church buildings, particularly at the main entrance, the entrance to the worship space, beside the washrooms, and at the chancel steps
- Instructional posters will be placed over hand sanitizers and bathroom sinks

Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning volunteers will ensure that frequently touched surfaces are disinfected properly after church gatherings in accordance with the provincial guidelines.

- Instructional posters will be placed in the sacristy and maintenance room
- Following each worship service, the church will be cleaned and disinfected with special attention given to bathrooms, switches, doorknobs, communion vessels, microphones, sound booth items, lecterns and pews.
- Cleaning volunteers will use face masks and gloves

Special Considerations for Worship and Small Groups

Communion

Celebrants and parishioners will practice communion safely, honoring the provincial and diocesan guidelines.

- Celebrant will use hand sanitizer prior to communion
- Communion wafers and wine will be covered during consecration, and celebrant will consume the priest's host and wine
- Communion will be administered in one kind only (bread) to communicants seated in their pews
- Celebrant will wear face mask and use the hand sanitizer repeatedly during administration

Baptism

Celebrants and parishioners will practice baptism safely, honoring the provincial and diocesan guidelines.

- Only one individual or single home bubbled group will be baptized in any given service
- Celebrant will use hand sanitizer at the beginning and end of the baptism
- Celebrant and candidates will wear a face mask
- Candidates will remain seated and come forward one at a time when invited by the celebrant; physical distancing at 2 metres will be observed around the font

Offering

Wardens will collect offerings in a safe manner, honoring the provincial and diocesan guidelines.

- Offerings will be collected in a locked box at the entrance to the worship space
- Wardens will oversee the offering and take the box to a safe location for counting; box will be disinfected
- Counters will wash hands before counting, wear a mask and disposable gloves while counting, and wash hands after counting

Congregational Singing

Congregational singing will NOT be permitted during this phase of recovery. A soloist is permitted to sing if distanced at 4 metres.

Sunday School and Sunday Coffee Hour

Sunday School will be suspended for this phase of recovery. The parish hall at St. Mark's will be open to families for age-appropriate activities.

Leadership Meetings and Small Group Gatherings

At least one trained volunteer will be present to oversee leadership meetings and small group gatherings.

- All participants will be asked to provide proof of vaccination
- Parish halls may be used for these purposes outside of Sunday worship time
- No food or beverages will be shared during this phase of recovery

Communication and Follow Up

The operational plan will be communicated to both parishes.

- The rector will communicate and update the operational plan on the website as needed
- Everyone will be encouraged to use automatic transfer or withdrawal for offering rather than cash