

**Plan for In Person Worship –  
Westdale United Church,  
Peterborough, ON**

**THIS DOCUMENT WAS INITIALLY PREPARED IN AUGUST  
2020 AND HAS BEEN UPDATED MONTHLY TO REFLECT  
CHANGES AS THEY OCCUR.**

**SHOULD YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT  
THE CHURCH OFFICE. YOUR CONCERNS WILL BE FORWARDED TO  
THE MOST APPROPRIATE PERSON FOR RESPONSE AND YOU WILL  
BE CONTACTED TO RESOLVE ANY ISSUES**

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL IN PERSON/ON SITE WORSHIP  
SUSPENDED DECEMBER 26, 2020**

*March 12, 2021*

*Plan for In Person Worship – Westdale United Church, Peterborough, ON:*

*Amended March 12, 2021*

This document was initially prepared for and approved by the Unified Board of Westdale United Church, Peterborough, ON and the United Church Regional Council in August 2020. This plan was developed in the spirit of the Mission Statement of Westdale Church, endeavoring **to care for one another as we continue to live our faith**. The plan is updated monthly to reflect changes that have been implemented over the preceding weeks.

**From the United Church of Canada**

<https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/reopening-churches-during-covid-19>

*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.*

***On the opening of churches***

*On Friday June 12 at a regular monthly meeting of the United Church regional council executive, the Assembly of Elders, passed the following motion.*

**2020-06-12-086 MOTION** (R. Lambie/N. Sutherland) That the **East Central Ontario Regional Council Assembly of Elders:**

- a. *strongly recommend that no churches reopen for public worship before Labour Day weekend;*
- b. *expect that every Community of Faith prepare guidelines for reopening and submit their plan to the Regional Council ([eastcentralontrio@united-church.ca](mailto:eastcentralontrio@united-church.ca)) two weeks prior to their proposed opening date;*
- c. *agree to post and circulate the information and resources pertaining to safely reopening Communities of Faith;*
- d. *strongly encourage Communities of Faith to be in touch with their local health units;*
- e. *expect that every Community of Faith create a separate plan with guidelines for reopening buildings to rentals and community activities or Community groups; and*
- f. *continue to provide information, as developments require. **Carried***

**THE WESTDALE UNITED CHURCH, PETERBOROUGH PLAN**

**Guiding Principles**

- The aim of this plan is to demonstrate planning and action that reflects the spirit, not only the letter, of national, provincial, local and Church guidelines – creating as much safety as possible for all within our space

- Ongoing compliance with health and safety legislation/regulation is required
- The initial return to work and worship within the Church building is the first phase of a much longer transition to a 'new normal'.
- Employers have a legal responsibility to do everything reasonably practicable to minimize health and safety risks to their staff.
- Open, transparent communication with staff, congregants and renters about changes being planned and implemented, coupled with visible protective action and cuing, is critical to building and retaining trust within the Church
- Space must be organized, and use of that space prioritized, to accommodate the most critical activities of the Church.
- Flexibility in planning will be required to adapt to changing circumstances.

### **Planning Steps**

- Step 1: Learn and stay informed about how COVID-19 spreads
- Step 2: Assess risks of COVID-19 spread in the Church environment
- Step 3: Modify practices and space within the Church environment to lower risk
- Step 4: Seek advice as needed

## **STEP 1: LEARN AND STAY INFORMED**

### **Status as of August 10, 2020**

In March 2020, prior to the provincial shut-down, the Board of Westdale United Church established an ad hoc working group, responsible to the Board, to deal with recommendations related to safety, closure and re-opening. In October 2020 the Unified Board approved the creation of a new Health and Safety Committee to replace the ad hoc working group and assume responsibility for the ongoing response to both Covid and broader workplace health and safety issues.

Initial actions included removal of all soft materials (e.g. Bibles, hymnals) from the Sanctuary, assessment of the availability of hand sanitizer and the posting of signage (March 12) indicating that all those with recent travel or with any specific symptoms not enter the Church building.

The Church ceased all on site activity on March 14. The Minister and the Administrative Assistant worked from home. Worship was offered in an online environment. The building was checked every two to three days to ensure safety and appropriate operation of environmental controls.

The coordinator for the working group was charged with remaining current as regards provincial and federal directives and known scientific information related to Covid 19. In addition to ad hoc communication with the Board Chair and the Minister, coordinator reports were incorporated into the Board agenda beginning in May, 2020.

Websites related to directions for Church re-opening in Ontario, other relevant federal, provincial and local website, including the UCC websites have been used to inform and guide planning. A comprehensive list of these sites appears at the end of this document.

Consultation with the local Public Health Unit representative is ongoing.

## STEP 2: ASSESS RISKS OF COVID-10 SPREAD IN THE CHURCH ENVIRONMENT.

There are 6 specific areas of risk within the church environment:

- I. Office exposure – for the Minister and the Administrative Assistant
- II. Sanctuary, including the technology booth
- III. Christian education - within the Sunday School for children aged 0 to 16
- IV. Washrooms
- V. Kitchen/food service – for anyone using the kitchen or consuming product from the kitchen
- VI. Meeting rooms –for church use (ie committee meetings) and rentals

Appendix A outlines the risk assessment for each of these areas.

Room spaces/capacities have been assessed and modified as follows:

	Capacity	Adjusted Capacity**	With Tables	With Table Adjusted
<b>Henderson Hall</b>	329		260	
<b>Room 1: Classroom</b>	44		35	
<b>Room 2</b>	44		35	
<b>Room 3: Nursery</b>	28	closed	22	closed
<b>Room 4: Library</b>	28		22	
<b>Overflow</b>	76	12	60	
<b>Sanctuary</b>	240	72		
<b>Serenity Room</b>	28			

\*\* If the Overflow area is used to supplement the sanctuary, then it is subject to the 30% rule (note: maximum giving distancing is 12)

\*\* Rooms not used for Worship are covered under the ‘maximum of 50’ (as at mid July, 2020) rule not the 30% of capacity limit however the 6 foot physical distancing rule still applies to those rooms and as such the capacity in everything other than the Hall is severely limited.

## STEP 3: MODIFY PRACTICES AND SPACE

The following modifications have been made and approved by the Board as of August 5, 2020. A phased return to use of the Church has been adopted for all spaces within the Church

- The Minister and Administrative Assistant returned, on a part time basis, to work within the office environment the week of June 22. Appropriate PPE (masks/face shields/ cleanser/ sanitizer) is available.
- At this time, on-site visitor activity is not anticipated and the Church doors remain locked. It is anticipated that this will continue for the foreseeable future and will be reassessed in December 2020.
- Worship resumed in the Sanctuary on September 13, 2020. Attendance has ranged from 22 to 37.

- All individuals age 2 and over entering the Church are required to be masked; signage indicating is posted on all doors.
- An assessment of the capacity of each Church space, including the sanctuary, has been conducted. Maximum capacity is 240; 30% = 72. 68 seats (not including the Minister, Music Director and Sound Booth operators) have been delineated, with two meter spacing for those not cohabitating (68+2+2=72).
- Seating will be done from the front of the sanctuary to the back and unseating at the end of worship will proceed from the back to the front under the guidance of the Ushers. Preferred seating options may not be available.
- The individual reading scripture for the Service will be asked to sit on the end of a row to eliminate 'crossing over' others present when entering/exiting the pew.
- A survey of congregants indicated that there are a significant number who are not intending at this time to return to on site worship. It is anticipated that the number of seats available will be sufficient to accommodate those returning, in a physically distanced manner, for the next several months.
- A log, by date of entry, is maintained with the name and contact information for every individual entering the Church. These logs are retained for 4 weeks. If/When other onsite activities resume (eg committee meetings, rentals), the committee chair/renter of record will be responsible for the development and maintenance of these lists.
- **ENTERING/EXITING**
  - The practice of "greeting" is discontinued. There will be two to three individuals each week responsible for seating/unseating the congregation, one of whom will maintain the log of those in attendance.
  - All congregants attending service will be masked **before** entering through the double doors. Hand wash, which is required, is located at the sign in table. Names/phone numbers for all attending are retained for 4 weeks.
  - Ushers will identify appropriate seating for those entering the Sanctuary. Only those who are cohabiting may sit together. All others must be 6 feet apart and seated in front of one of the white tabs located in each pew.
  - At the end of the service the ushers will ask people to leave, row by row **down the centre aisle**. Please remain seated until asked by the usher to leave.
  - To exit the church, walk down the corridor towards Henderson Hall and exit at the single door at the end of the Church.
  - **THOSE WHO HAVE MOBILITY LIMITATIONS** may wait for their car to arrive at the double doors. Chairs will be available. Waiting between the double doors is not permitted.
  - **Congregants are asked not to gather to visit in the parking lot.** Please proceed to your cars and exit the Church property.
- Worship is conducted without choir or congregational singing.
- Collection plates are no longer be passed. Two plates are available at the entry to the Sanctuary in which offerings may be placed.
- **Sunday School** will not resume on September 13, 2020. The Sunday School will remain closed until the New Year. This decision will be reassessed in January 2021.

- When Sunday School resumes, Children will go directly to the designated Sunday School rooms rather than entering/exiting the Sanctuary as has been the earlier practice. (**note:** Sunday School is governed by the “maximum of 50” rule, not the 30% capacity rule however social distancing is still required)
- Children will have individually assigned (and named) buckets for supplies such as crayons (no sharing)
- No food/drink is permitted (not even personally brought in from home) in the Sunday School
- Children will remain in the designated rooms until the parent/responsible guardian comes to the door and then they will exit the church together.
- **Nursery services** will remain closed. Infants/younger children not yet eligible for Sunday School will remain with their parents. A review of this decision will be undertaken in January 2021.
- The kitchen will remain closed. A review of this decision will be undertaken in April 2021. (**note:** feedback from Public Health was that this is likely to be a longer than shorter closure; currently opening the kitchen is not allowed)
- Rentals and nonpaying renters such as Cubs/Scouts are not being accommodated at this time. A review of this decision will be undertaken in January 2021.
- Online worship services continue to be offered.

**The following safety/PPE precautions have been put in place**

A 6 – 8 month supply of approved cleanser and hand sanitizer, with 10 additional dispensers, have been ordered and installed.

50 disposable face masks and 4 face shields were provided to the Minister/Administrative Assistant when part time attendance on site resumed. An additional 250 disposable masks, intended for staff use only, have been ordered with delivery expected in early/mid August.

- 150 cloth masks will be available for those who may require this at entry to the Church (ie, did not know, forgot). These masks are individually bagged and available in both adult and child sizes.
- Traffic controls:
  - Only the Minister and Administrative Assistant use the East Door.
  - All others enter and exit only through the West Side double doors.
- Congregants/visitors will retain their coats (ie no coat rack services available – all hangers to be removed)
- Magazines and other related materials are no longer accessible in the lobby.
- Visitors book has been removed
- A Face Shield has been added to the emergency response equipment
- The gathering/meeting space at the North Side entry to the Church (“the Bus Stop”) has been removed.
- All hangers (front and back entry) have been removed to storage
- All waste baskets have internal bags in place, including office recycling bins
- Kitchen Closed signs are in place
- Fridges have been cleaned and emptied
- Nametag cupboards have been taped off

- Donation bins have been relocated, away from the offices.
- 6 foot distances have been measured from the entry door to the front of the Sanctuary, from the vestibule to the exit door and from the bathrooms back to the vestibule.
- Water fountain taped off
- Posted mask required signage
- Posted Attention Visitors signage
- Posted Screening signage
- Posted Washroom signage (hand washing, capacity and risk)
- Bagged and removed all soft surface (eg stuffed) toys from the nursery and taped off the door
- Installed 6 foot distance signage for entry/exit/hallway
- Spindle and cord dividers placed in the exit hallway (traffic on the right side going away from the Sanctuary; traffic on the left side returning to the Sanctuary) to accommodate distanced waiting space for the bathrooms
- Mark out seating in the smaller rooms to identify maximum capacity at 6 foot separation
- A comprehensive, multi-dimensional communication plan for congregants and the public began August 9 and included:
  - A letter to congregants highlighting the changes (hard copy and email)
  - Weekly highlight for an element of the changes made to be presented in the online worship service
  - Plan, once approved by the Regional Council, to be posted on the church website
  - Video “walk through” (twice) with the Minister late August, for worship service and to be posted on the church website (August/September 2020)
- In late October 2020, a log book, for documenting active screening of staff, volunteers and visitors entering the Church other than during worship was established, in accord with direction from the PHU.
- A portable stand-alone room air filtration system was provided in late November 2020. It is size suitable for either office, the Serenity Room or the smaller classrooms.
- Signage reflecting the provincial regulations for a Yellow Zone was posted on entry doors on November 23, 2020.

**The following actions are still required or are in progress (anticipated timeline for completion)**

- Install and fill additional hand sanitizer stations when available
- Establish criteria to be utilized in determining if a further closure is required (January 2021)

## **STEP 4: SEEK ADVICE AS NEEDED**

- June 3: Contact with Public Health; direction for various websites and contact information obtained
- June 24: Westdale Worship Committee meeting consulted re worship activities; recommendations pending on Communion processes
- June 24/25: Consultation with Chair of Finance/Trustees rep related to management of collection
- June/July: Consultation with Property Committee (ongoing)
- July 2: Consultation with Public Health Unit representative
- July 2: Events Coordination Chair asked to review Sunday School options with that committee
- July 20: Meeting with Minister/Music Direction to review music activities
- Ongoing: Review of websites; Local Public Health Unit is forwarding information on a regular basis, as more directions become available

## **SUMMARY OF SACRAMENT AND CELEBRATIONS:**

### **Baptisms**

In accord with the recommendations of the United Church of Canada, baptisms will be celebrated in the following manner:

*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.*

### **Communion**

The Sacrament of Communion, on World Wide Communion Day and on Christmas Eve, will be celebrated on behalf of the congregation by the Leader, with moments for silent reflection for the congregation. A review of this decision will be taken in December 2020.

### **Funerals**

Funeral services, when required, will be conducted in the relevant Funeral Home.

### **Music**

Instrumental music will resume when in-person Worship services resume. Choir/soloist singing, when available, will be broadcast onto the screen in the Sanctuary, having been previously performed and recorded at home or in isolation in the Sanctuary. Congregational singing will not resume.

*Note: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r20364>*

*(a) every person who is singing or playing [brass or wind instruments] must be separated from every other person by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier*

### **Weddings**

In Church weddings are not being conducted at this time. Individual arrangements may be considered by the Minister for weddings at other sites. A review of this decision will be undertaken in December 2020

## RESOURCES UTILIZED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Addressing COVID Fear and Stigma

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-12-Addressing-COVID-19-Fear-and-Stigma.pdf>

Attention Visitors Signage

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_signs\\_EN\\_visitors.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_signs_EN_visitors.pdf)

Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>

Coronavirus Tips – Places of Worship

<https://www.ccohs.ca/images/products/pandemiccovid19/pdf/worship.pdf>

COVID 19 Advice: Places of Worship

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Advice-Religious-Services-Rites-and-Ceremonies-June-15-2020-Final.pdf>

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Advice-Religious-Services-Rites-and-Ceremonies-June-15-2020-Final.pdf>

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-places-of-worship/>

COVID-19 – Reopening Safely: Guidance for Workplaces & Retail

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-workplaces/>

Face Coverings and Face Masks

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/face-coverings-and-face-masks>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/2020/05/factsheet-covid-19-non-medical-masks.pdf?la=en>

<http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/faq-for-establishments-implementing-mandatory-non-medical-mask-or-face-covering-policies/>

Faith Communities and COVID-19: United Church of Canada

<https://www.united-church.ca/covid-19>

Framework for Re-opening our Province: Stage 2 (Ontario)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/framework-reopening-our-province-stage-2>

Framework for Re-opening our Province: Stage 3 (Ontario)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/framework-reopening-our-province-stage-3#section-0>

Hand Sanitizers – Poster

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-05-25-Using-Hand-Sanitizers-Safely.pdf>

Hand Sanitizing for Kids - Poster

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Hand-Santizing-for-Kids.pdf>

Hand Washing - Poster

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-PPH-Six-Steps-of-Proper-Handwashing.pdf>

Hand Washing for Kids - Poster

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Handwashing-for-Kids.pdf>

Kids and Masks

<https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/news/kids-and-masks-tips-from-an-expert.aspx>

Ontario Central Forms Repository

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?openform&ENV=WWE&NO=002-SR-LV-129E>

Provincial Regulation for Indoor wedding, funeral, religious service, rite or ceremony

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200052>

Provincial Regulation for Use of a Meeting Space

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r20263>

Reopening Child Care Services

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf)

Reopening Toronto Businesses & Workplaces during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Four Step Public Health Planning Guide

[https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/949e-Reopening-Toronto-Businesses-during-COVID19\\_TorontoPublicHealth\\_May2020.pdf](https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/949e-Reopening-Toronto-Businesses-during-COVID19_TorontoPublicHealth_May2020.pdf)

Screening Signage

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/STOP-COVID-19.pdf>

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services Guidance on Health and Safety for Places of Worship

<https://d1ow5xpphy0w2p.cloudfront.net/common/covid-19-worship-places-health-and-safety-guidance.pdf?mtime=20200609144243&focal=none>

**APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b>WORK SETTING/ ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RISK OF CONTACT/ SPREAD (h/m/l)</b>	<b>RISK MITIGATION STRATEGY</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>ACTIONS/COMMUNICATION REQUIRED</b>
<b>Offices</b>	<b>M</b>	PPE provided Church doors locked during working hours Masks required for all on site Visual cue barriers to be installed	Masks/face shields/gloves /cleanser  Signage	Provided mid June  Complete
<b>Sanctuary</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Worship:</b> Social distancing seating to be established  Entry/exit practices to be defined  All soft surfaces to be removed  <b>Technology Booth:</b> Social distancing seating to be established	Signage in pews and distancing of pews     Signage	Complete  Complete  Complete  Dedicated laptop purchased for the booth
<b>Christian Education</b>	<b>H</b>	Sunday School Closed	Signage	Reassess in September 2021
<b>Washrooms</b>	<b>M</b>	Limit occupancy to 2 maximum	Signage	Complete
<b>Kitchen/Food Service</b>	<b>H</b>	Kitchen closed until further notice	Signage	Complete  Reassess in August 2021
<b>Meeting Rooms</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Church Meetings:</b> Off site by online communication  <b>Rentals:</b> on hold at this time	Signage  Notification of renters	Complete  Reassess in August 2021