



The Anglican Church of St Augustine of Canterbury

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Monday, August 31, 2020

Dear friends,

We have been apart for many months and so we are excited and eager to see one another when we can re-open our building again to members of the congregation. We will be coming back to a familiar space, but like many public spaces, you will notice several changes to our layout and our regular way of worshipping together. Our diocese and our bishops have worked to compile extensive reopening guidelines to help keep everyone as safe as possible as we imagine doing church in a safe and modified way. We also note that many people feel cautious about a return to church and it might not be the right time for everyone. Please be assured that online worship will continue after we re-open on September 13 and that Megan is available for one on one pastoral visits and distribution of the sacraments. We are grateful to Jamie McLean, Bente Willis, and all those who have contributed to the implementation of the diocesan reopening guidelines.

What to expect:

- **Masks:** In order to comply with public health recommendations, all people will be expected to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth while inside the church building. Please plan to bring your own and put it on before entering the building. A supply of disposable masks will be available in case you forget yours. Masks can be removed temporarily while receiving the host at communion. Communicants will stand in a designated area to remove their mask and receive the host. We will be using wafers for the time being and there is no common cup. Hand sanitizer will be available on entry, before, and after communion.
- **Physical Distancing:** Staying 6 feet (2M) is a key strategy to fighting COVID-19. We have changed the layout of the worship space to accommodate physical distancing and receiving communion. Chairs have been spread out in our space and the layout is a little different to maximize the use of space. There are directions and markings on the floors and on doors to help navigate through the space. To minimize movement through the space, the Broadway entrance will remain closed – please use the parking lot or ramp doors. We will also stay at our seats during worship - a big change is that we cannot stand in a circle around the altar. Children need to remain with their families. Please speak with Megan about options for resources they might use while seated with their families. We will exchange waves, nods, smiles during the peace rather than gestures like hand shakes that require physical touch. Personal items, like coats and bags, should come with you to your seat.

- **Service Times:** We are adjusting our service times slightly. From 9:00 - 9:45 am, those participating in a physically distanced bible study are welcome to meet in the narthex. Musicians, primarily soloists, will gather in the worship space to rehearse. At 10:00 am, we will begin our worship and it will likely conclude at 11:00 am. We cannot gather for coffee hour or share refreshments together in person, but at 11:30 am, we will continue our Zoom coffee time. This will allow for some social time and also allow those worshipping at home to connect with the community.
- **Cleaning:** Plans are in place to thoroughly clean our space, including high touch areas. We have stored away hard to sanitize items, like the upholstered chairs and books. We are limiting rental use to the Children's Garden only. We are also limiting use of shared space, like the cloak room, the sacristy, the offices, the kitchen, and the Bracken Room. The washroom will be available to church members, but we will not hold meetings in the Bracken Room for the time being. This will help reduce the cleaning and sanitizing burden on our staff. In person church meetings will take place in the worship space or in the narthex area. Sidespeople will clean off shared items, like the stair chair, between uses. Hand sanitizer will be readily available.
- **Self-screening:** If you are feeling unwell, or if you have underlying conditions that make you especially vulnerable to COVID-19, it is important that you stay home. If you have any symptoms that could be COVID-19, such as flu-like symptoms, fever, loss of taste/smell or if you have travelled outside the province, please stay home. Worship will be available to you online and Megan can help arrange pastoral visits and home communion. No one should feel obligated to attend church in person. All people are expected to self-screen at the entrance, sign in and provide contact information in case contact tracing is needed, and sanitize their hands upon entry.
- **Food/drink:** Food and drink will not be served at the church at this time. Families may bring snacks for their children. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own water bottle. The kitchen areas will be closed off when the building is open to the public.
- **Music:** The research on the spread of COVID-19 via singing is still evolving. For the time being, we will not have congregational singing at church. We will still have music in our worship. Marcus will play organ and piano. Soloists can sing provided they wear masks and stand 4M apart from anyone else. If you know of a musician who would like to lead us in solo singing or with instrumental music, please let Megan and Marcus know. We would love to explore creative music options to enhance our worship together.

If you would like a complete copy of the guidelines and you are unable to access them online, please be in touch with the church office. If you can access the web, please take 20 minutes to watch the reopening video from the diocese: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt82HGrc7dl>

Once again, we are grateful to our members who have been working so hard to help us return to in person worship. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we adopt to new ways of gathering. Please direct questions and feedback to Megan via the church office.

Blessings to you and yours as we take this next step.

In Christ,

The Rev'd Megan Jull