

COVID SAFETY PLAN

PHASES 1, 2 and 3

GORDON UNITED CHURCH

935 Goldstream Ave., Victoria, BC

Gordon United Church is committed to balancing its primary values of hospitality and inclusivity with a commitment to care for all who are part of the worshipping community and the day-to-day life of the congregation and building. We are committed to care for the vulnerable among us and want to support and safeguard all who may be especially spiritually, mentally or physically vulnerable at this time.

The following are the opening Phases as outlined by the United Church of Canada.

Phase 1: Worship is online only with some exceptions for outdoor worship. Small groups may meet in person in small numbers, with social distancing and masks.

Phase 2: Reopening In-Person Worship during the Pandemic. Worship and other activities resume in church buildings allowing up to 50 participants with social distancing and other measures.

Phase 3: Full return during pandemic. It is required that the British Columbia Industry specific protocols are considered and reviewed. Each Council makes decisions based on these standards for reopening. The guiding principle is the safety of all who enter the building.

RISK ASSESSMENT (where the risks could be identified):

- The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets by coughing, singing, shouting etc. or by aerosol transmission. It can also spread if a person touches a contaminated surface and then touches their face.
- The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer people come to other people, the more time one spends near them, and the more people one comes near.
- The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.
- In the development of Gordon United's plan to decrease the risk of infection noted above, Gordon United has involved the Council Chair, a Pastoral Care Personnel, the Ministry & Personnel Co-Chairs, and the Minister (a committee which shall be known as the 'Safety Team').
- Areas where people gather are the Sanctuary and CE Hall.
- Ventilation: Outer doors or windows MUST be open to form a cross-draft to ensure appropriate ventilation until another system can be found. If it is genuinely too cold to open exterior doors/windows, they can be opened right before and right after the meeting for 10 to 15 minutes when using the Sanctuary or CE Hall. This is a temporary measure until a more approved ventilation system is installed.

- The kitchen has been closed until further notice as per government recommendations.
- Physical distancing will be difficult to maintain in areas such as the Sanctuary aisle, hallway, and CE Hall doorways.
- The following persons who must not enter Gordon United Church are:
 - a) People who have had symptoms of Covid-19 in the last 14 days.
 - b) People who have been directed by Public Health to self-isolate.
 - c) People who have arrived from outside Canada and who are directed to self-isolate for 14 days.
 - d) People who have been exposed to someone with Covid19.
 - e) People who are feeling sick, including those with ANY symptoms or feelings of sickness, especially if they have a fever, upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms (e.g., chills, worsening cough, sore throat, muscle aches).
 - f) Congregational members will be asked Covid19 questions by ushers, greeters, and Council members in reference to the policy on who may not attend Gordon United Church.

PROTOCOLS:

Industry specific protocols have been reviewed by the Safety Team for the development of the Safety Plan for Gordon United Church. They are:

- WorkSafeBC applicable to churches and places of employment
- BC Health Officer notices re: orders, guidance, and notices applicable to churches
- United Church of Canada National Office guidelines
- Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada

a) First level (elimination)

- 'Occupancy limits' and protocols and scheduling have been created to ensure people maintain a social distance.
- The **maximum** number of persons allowed in a building is 50 persons but only if the room can accommodate this number while honouring the safe physical distance of 2 meters or 6 feet. At Gordon United Church, the Sanctuary and the CE Hall have been measured and calculated for the number of patrons who can be accommodated.
They are: **Sanctuary - 38 CE Hall - 25**
- Signs have been posted at the various rooms in Gordon United Church's building, including washrooms, notifying the public of the maximum number of persons allowed in the room.
- Signs have been posted notifying the public to practice social distancing of 6 feet while in the building.
- Markers have been placed on the Sanctuary floor to indicate seating spaces which are 6 feet apart.
- Markers have been placed outside the washrooms indicating standing distance of 6 feet.

- Pews and cushions, book holders, and hymn books have been removed for the safety of our congregants. It is deemed that pew removal promotes a safer entrance and exit to and from the Sanctuary.

b) Second level (engineering)

- Safety barriers for the Office Administrator are not required as the desk is located three steps above the office floor. People will not be allowed past those steps. An “X” will mark where a person must stand to address the Office Administrator.
- The minister’s office must be fitted with a Plexiglas barrier between the desk and the sitting area. The sitting area is limited to 2 persons.
- Otherwise, social distance can be maintained without further engineering controls.

c) Third level (administrative)

- Protocols for in-person services to be distributed to members of the congregation via email and posted letter when a decision has been made to have in-person services. (Appendix A).
- Floor arrows to be placed to indicate the direction of travel within the building.
- Enter and exit signs are to be placed on doors in the Sanctuary to ensure single direction travel.
- Protocols to be instituted to do contact tracing. Sheets are to be shredded after one month.
- Protocols and schedules have been developed for sanitizing.
- Sanitizing Teaching Tool has been developed (Appendix B).
- People doing the sanitizing must be trained.

d) Fourth level (PPE)

- Education and training (if necessary) is required for the wearing of masks using information on ‘Selecting and Using Masks’ and ‘Instructions on How to Use a Mask’. (Appendices C and D)
- Members of the congregation must wear a mask when entering the church building and during in-person services.
- Members of the congregation are to be advised that there would be no congregational singing during the in-person service. A soloist seated 12 feet back from both the minister and music director would lead the hymns.
- Members of the congregation are to be advised that bulletins would be handed out by volunteers wearing gloves who had been trained in proper hygiene practices (e.g., not touching their own face, no physical contact with the recipient).

e) Effective cleaning and hygiene practices

- In reference to information on 'Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces' from WorkSafeBC, Gordon United Church has easily accessible hand washing facilities which are located in each of the nearby bathrooms.
- WorkSafeBC posters 'Hand Washing' and 'Cover Coughs and Sneezes' and 'Glove Removal Procedure' are to be placed at each of the handwashing facilities. (Appendices E and F and G)
- Sanitizing protocols are to be placed in all common areas – washrooms, light switches, door handles, counters, pews. (Appendix B).
- The Sanctuary is sanitized after use. The meeting rooms are sanitized after use. The washrooms are sanitized at the end of every day. The hallways are sanitized every day. A log is kept of the sanitizing.
- Hymn books and other printed material are to be removed from the Sanctuary.
- Doors and windows are to be opened to allow air circulation from outside when people gather.
- Financial collection would not occur during the in-person but that offering plates would be available at the exits at the end of the service. The financial items (cash, cheques, offering envelopes) would not be touched for 48 hours.
- The Safety Plan protocol will be distributed to renters and tenants, who are required to sign an agreement to follow these. The penalty for non-compliance is forfeiture of their right to the space.

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING USAGE:

- Gordon United's policies address who can be in our building, how to address illness that arises at Gordon, and how those in our building can be kept safe. The following people **MUST** stay home for the sake of others in the community:
 - a) People who have had symptoms of Covid-19 in the last 14 days.
 - b) People who have been directed by Public Health to self-isolate
 - c) People who have arrived from outside Canada and who are directed to self-isolate for 14 days.
 - d) People who have been exposed to someone with Covid-19.
 - e) People who are feeling sick, including those with ANY symptoms or feelings of sickness, especially if they have a fever, upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms (e.g., chills, worsening cough, sore throat, muscle aches).
- The following are **ENCOURAGED** to stay home:
 - a) People who live with someone with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms.
 - b) People, especially the elderly (over 65 years of age) with underlying or compromised medical conditions.
 - c) Family members who live with elderly people or those at risk.

- Staff or volunteers who may start to feel ill at work will be instructed as follows:
 - a) to wash or sanitize their hands, be provided with a mask, and isolated. The person is to go straight home.
 - b) if the person is severely ill (difficulty breathing, chest pains), 911 will be called
 - c) clean and disinfect any surfaces with which the sick person has been in contact.

COMMUNICATION PLANS AND TRAINING

- A Communication Plan must be in place to ensure that staff and the core group of volunteers including Council members and greeters and ushers are trained in policies and procedures including reviewing the Covid19 guidelines, contact tracing, and traffic control.
- All staff and volunteers are given the written policies for staying home when sick.
- Signage is to be posted including building and room occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices.
- Signage is to be posted at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises.
- Hard copies of the protocols are to be posted in the building and on the Gordon United Church Website.

MONITOR THE PREMISES AND UPDATE PLAN AS NECESSARY

- If new areas of concerns are identified, or if members of the public, volunteers or users of the facility bring forward an area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working, steps will be taken to update Gordon United Church's policies and procedures by the Safety Team where procedures have been implemented for Stage 1.
- If there are any concerns, people are encouraged to contact the Office Administrator, 250-478-6632 or email office@gordonunitedchurch.ca.

This updated Safety Plan has been adapted from the original plan at Centennial United Church with permission from their minister Rev. Alanna Menu and Rev. Gail Miller, Regional Minister.

Please refer to the original '*Gordon United Church Safety Procedures for Stage 1*' for further instructions for Tenant Groups, Small Church Groups, and Outdoor Worship during Stage 1.

IMPORTANT NOTICE RE: COVID-19: Please note any interaction with the general public poses an elevated risk of being exposed to COVID-19 and we cannot guarantee that you will not be exposed while in attendance at Gordon United Church. We encourage you to follow the Gordon United Church's Safety Policies as posted, as well as local laws and restrictions for your own safety. It is an expectation that while attending Gordon United Church that the Safety Protocols are adhered to as we cannot be responsible for any illness occurring on the church premises.