

**Revised Guidelines reviewed as of September 16, 2021 for BC Synod Congregations**

COVID-19 Restrictions for Faith-Based Organizations

**All religious indoor worship services in all regions of BC**

**Guidance for Holding Low Risk Worship Services**

**Gathering and Events, Mandatory Face Coverings Covid 19 Order**

Be Informed	Notes
<p><b>Update as of September 13, 2021</b>                      Proof of Vaccination  <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable/covid-19/vaccination">Proof of vaccination and the BC Vaccine Card - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Update as of September 7, 2021</b>                      New Health Measures for Northern Health  <a href="#">New health measures introduced for Northern Health region   Stories</a></p> <p><b>Update as of September 2, 2021</b>                      Mandatory Face Coverings- Covid-19 Order  <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable/covid-19/face-coverings">Ministry of Health and (gov.bc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Update as of August 24, 2021</b>                      Guidance for Holding Low Risk Worship Services  <a href="#">COVID-19 Guidance Faith Based Organizations.pdf (bccdc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Update as of August 24, 2021</b>  <a href="#">Faith-Based, Spiritual, and Worship Practices (bccdc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Update as of August 20, 2021</b>                      Gatherings and Events from Interior Health  <a href="#">covid-19-mho-gatherings-events-central-okanagan.pdf (gov.bc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>BC Restart STEP 3 (as of July 1, 2021)</b>  <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable/covid-19/restart">BC's Restart: A plan to bring us back together - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)</a></p>	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px;"> <p>In accordance with the order of the <a href="#">provincial health officer</a>, a COVID-19 safety plan is no longer required (except for the Interior) but should have a communicable disease plan in place. The plan does not have to be posted.</p> <p><b>Safety plan:</b>  <a href="#">WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plan   WorkSafeBC</a></p> <p><b>Communicable disease plan:</b>  <a href="#">Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers   WorkSafeBC</a></p> </div> <p><b>Synod COVID-19 Response Team is available to assist you:</b></p> <p>Lower Mainland (A-L):  <b>Jean Jay</b> <a href="mailto:jeangunn8@hotmail.com">jeangunn8@hotmail.com</a></p> <p>Lower Mainland (M-Z) and Vancouver Island:  <b>Karen Lee</b> <a href="mailto:kelee2018karen@gmail.com">kelee2018karen@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Northern BC:  <b>Robin Dielissen</b> <a href="mailto:dielissen.rd@gmail.com">dielissen.rd@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Southern Interior:  <b>Pr. Brian Krushel</b> <a href="mailto:flcpastor@shaw.ca">flcpastor@shaw.ca</a></p>

<p><b>Preparations</b></p> <p>Congregations must ensure they are compliant with the most recent provincial and federal health regulations as posted on government websites and Work Safe BC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The church (as the Employer) must have a communicable disease plan in place.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers   WorkSafeBC</a></p>
<p><b>Seating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No capacity limits or restrictions on Worship services.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Communicate before opening</b></p>	<p><b>Notes</b></p>
<p>Congregations should consider being extra cautious and evaluate when the best time would be to re-open. Please inform the Covid Resource Team of your opening date.</p> <p>In Canada, a person is considered fully vaccinated when at least two weeks have elapsed after they received the final dose of a vaccine product series approved by the World Health Organization.</p> <p>Communicate what they can expect and go over the changes made to the worship space, common areas and children’s ministry to decrease risk of virus transmission. Communicate by email, mailed letter, website, poster, during virtual services and/or Youtube video. (see notes for examples of how to communicate to your congregation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Everyone should stay home if they are sick or not feeling well. Encourage anyone with symptoms of illness to use the <a href="#">BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool (thrive.health)</a> or the BCCDC <a href="#">When to get tested.pdf (bccdc.ca)</a> resource to know if they should seek testing for COVID-19. Include reminders in written communications (e.g., bulletins, emails etc.) and hang posters to ensure everyone checks if they’re feeling sick before attending in-person services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Everyone should clean their hands frequently.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Everyone eligible should be encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Everyone 12 and older who is not fully vaccinated is recommended to wear a mask during indoor worship services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Give others space. Faith leaders should encourage everyone to spread out and continue to use barriers and space markers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep things clean. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces can help prevent the spread of illnesses, including COVID-19.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of how you can communicate your re-opening:</b></p> <p>Poster Sample: <a href="https://bcsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Welcome-Back-Sample.pdf">https://bcsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Welcome-Back-Sample.pdf</a></p> <p>Poster Template: <a href="https://bcsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Welcome-Back-Template.docx">https://bcsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Welcome-Back-Template.docx</a></p> <p><b>Make this your own by inserting pictures from your own church building. This will help people visualize the changes they can expect when they are attending indoor worship</b></p> <p><b>Youtube video:</b></p> <p><a href="#">(690) Back to church guidelines 2020 - YouTube</a></p>

Preparing for Worship	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Print and share the message about staying safe and moving forward at a pace that feels comfortable. <b>See posters in Notes.</b></li> <li>❑ <b>All worship services (and receptions following services) are exempt from the mask mandate and the requirement for proof of vaccination. In addition, any public meetings held in faith-based settings that have a worship component such as youth groups and pastor meetings or essential services like NA/AA group meetings, warming and cooling centres, or providing food to people in need, are also exempt from the mask mandate and proof of vaccination requirement. Religious organizations can set their own policies on whether unvaccinated and not fully vaccinated people can attend in-person services.</b></li> <li>❑ Consider recommending or asking those who are unvaccinated to attend virtual services to further help protect community safety.</li> <li>❑ Faith leaders can implement additional prevention measures such as <b>promoting physical distancing, or restricting activities such as singing or sharing food.</b></li> <li>❑ Worship leaders should plan and practice their movement in the worship space to ensure physical distancing throughout the service.</li> <li>❑ Train greeters and ushers so they are familiar with traffic flows and revised practices.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Posters:</b></p> <p><a href="#">bcs-restart-theirownpace-poster-11x17.pdf (gov.bc.ca)</a>  <a href="#">bcs-restart-wearmask-poster-11x17.pdf (gov.bc.ca)</a>  <a href="#">bcs-restart-goldenrules-poster-11x17.pdf (gov.bc.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Signage:</b></p> <p>Sick or self isolating? Do not enter  <a href="#">DoNotEnter v1.1 (bccdc.ca)</a>            Cleaning and disinfecting  <a href="#">CleaningDisinfecting_PublicSettings_PPHchanges_April_07_2021 (bccdc.ca)</a>            How to wear a mask properly  <a href="#">Covid-SurgicalMaskv4_draft6 (bccdc.ca)</a></p>

Worship	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faith leaders, their staff and volunteers should monitor compliance with prevention measures. Those unwilling to follow the prevention measures in-place should be offered virtual services on an ongoing basis and restricted from attending in-person services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make announcements about the need for non-contact greetings and remind people to refrain from shaking hands and hugging.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Worship leaders should not share microphones.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Limit people’s movement in worship to minimize the opportunities for contact.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When sharing of the peace, people should remain where they were sitting and may bow or open their hands in a gesture of peace to those in other pews/seats around them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a place where worshippers can deposit physical offerings. Encourage worshippers to make contributions through electronic means.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offering counters have access to gloves and enough space to maintain physical distancing.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>All participants should consider their own health and the health of those in the group when deciding whether or not to participate.</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Singing</u></b>  <a href="#">How it Spreads (bccdc.ca)</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Activities such as singing and playing musical instruments are not restricted for worship service, though they are known to have some risk of transmission.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lower the risk by singing outdoors, or indoors in a well-ventilated space.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use barriers and physical distancing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For the next six months, participants can be limited to those who are fully vaccinated.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Holy Communion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce COVID-19 risk by using single-use cups or offering pre-packaged beverages.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Worshippers should go up for communion in an organized fashion, leaving physical distance between family groups.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mark to indicate the appropriate distance.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure worshippers are directed back to their seats in an organized fashion, leaving physical distance between family groups.</li> </ul>	

Renters / User Groups	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> an organized event such as a reception, celebration of life reception, or other event that does not have a worship component, does require attendees to provide proof of vaccination and wear masks. For information on how your organization can <a href="#">verify proof of vaccination click here</a>.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outside groups may use the building provided as long as they follow all government protocols. <b>This clause should be included in the rental agreement.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include Indemnity Clause in rental contracts. <b>See Notes.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Renters should have <b>each member</b> of their group complete a Release, Waiver of Liability (see Notes). Renters should keep forms in their file.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unless the rental agreement specifies that the renter must clean and disinfect, then it is the congregation’s responsibility to ensure the facility is safe. They must have their own communicable disease plan in place.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indemnity Clause for Rental contracts:</b>  <a href="https://elcic.box.com/s/obli5vky0jyxyidojcs1esluqvvyu30">https://elcic.box.com/s/obli5vky0jyxyidojcs1esluqvvyu30</a></p> <p><b>Release, Waiver of Liability,</b> and Assumption of Risk Agreement Form relating to COVID-19:  <a href="https://elcic.box.com/s/oe926id9pbo8aq99lyyttwk4qrg69e3h">https://elcic.box.com/s/oe926id9pbo8aq99lyyttwk4qrg69e3h</a></p>
Returning to Other In-person Ministries of the Congregation	Notes
<p><b>Visitation</b> as of July 19, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Religious leaders may attend the home of a member of their religious community to provide religious services to the occupant.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Care home and hospital visits no longer require scheduled visits in advance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Screening of visitors and Infection Prevention and Control practices such as hand hygiene, use of medical masks and physical distancing remain in place.</li> <li>-Strongly recommend visitors be fully immunized and will be asked to provide proof of vaccination status.</li> <li>-Fully immunized visitors are required to wear a medical mask while moving through the facility and in common areas but are not required to wear a mask while in direct contact with the person they are visiting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.bccdc.ca">Long-Term Care Facilities &amp; Assisted Living (bccdc.ca)</a></p>