



RETURN OF IN-PERSON CHURCH


How to prepare, What to expect

Translated and adapted from a presentation by
Eric Hebert-Daly, La Table des ministères en français.



We are called to be the Church:

- To celebrate God's presence,
- To live with respect in Creation,
- To love and serve others,
- To seek justice and resist evil
- To proclaim Jesus Crucified and risen our judge and our hope.

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- Why do we want to gather?
 - To see each other
 - To be the body of Christ together
 - To raise money
 - To serve our communities
 - To worship God.
 - To stop being invisible.



PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

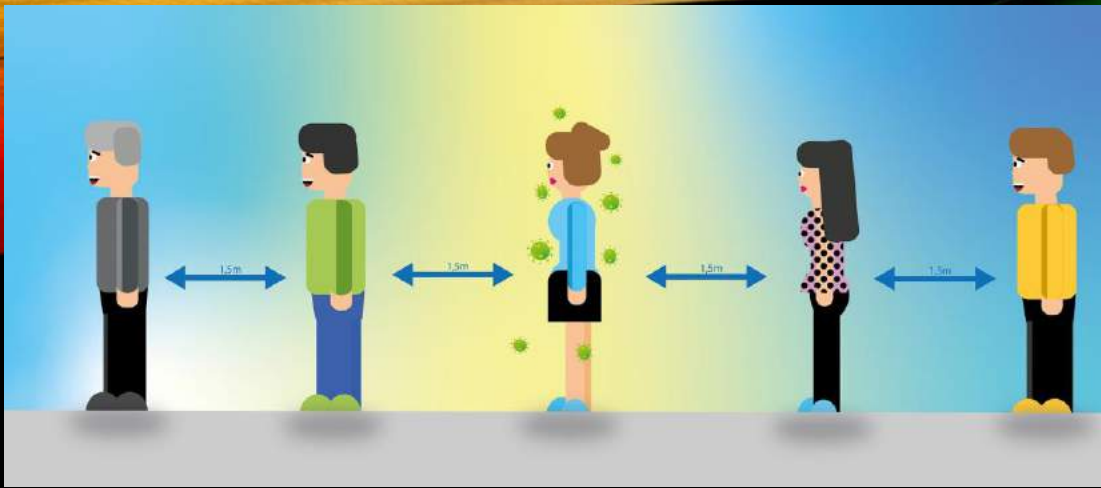
- Established by the UN at the Earth Summit in Rio 1992
- When innovations or situations have the potential for causing harm, and when extensive scientific knowledge on the matter is lacking, caution, pausing and review are called for.
- This principle is particularly important during a pandemic, when we face a highly contagious virus, for which there is neither a treatment nor a vaccine.



CONSEIL RÉGIONAL
NAKONHA:KA
REGIONAL COUNCIL

REQUIREMENTS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL

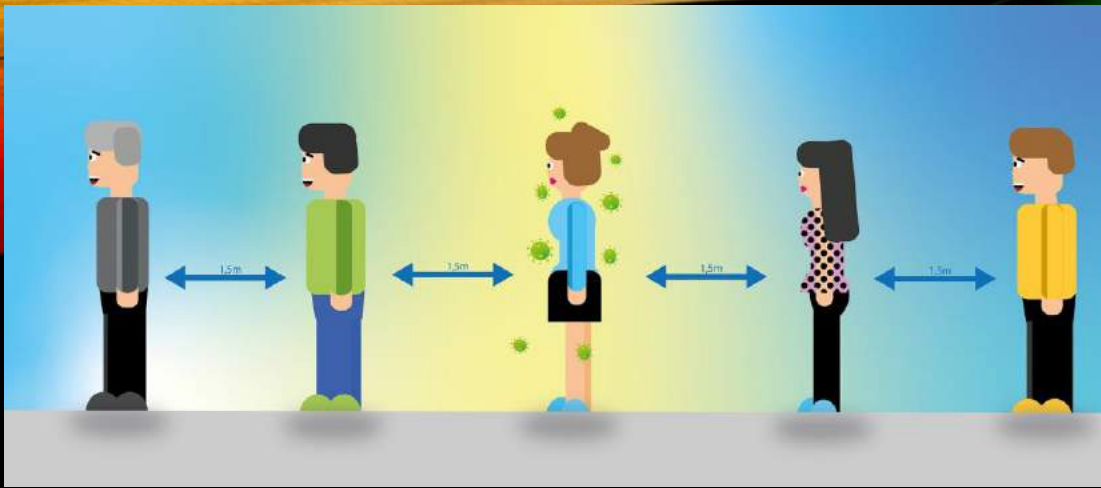
- Decision to open for worship is one taken by the local community of faith
- Preopening- establishment of protocols, submit plan to regional council for review
- Phase 1– Implement reopening plan and start small group meeting but no physical worship
- Phase 2-- Worship with restrictions and controls recommended not before Labour Day
- Phase 3– Broaden worship and gatherings based Santé Québec protocols.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

In Quebec, people may now gather for worship with many controls in place.

- Sanctuaries may welcome up to 50% of their capacity or 50 people whichever ever is fewer.
- People may not gather before or after worship, and must always keep 2 mt distance between themselves and those who do not live in their household. The use of masks is encouraged.
- People must avoid meeting in the aisles, and should wait until the person in front of them is seated before taking their place.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

- At the end of worship, the congregation must leave in an orderly fashion to avoid meeting others in the aisles.
- Pews or seats must be marked to identify where people may sit (2 mt distance in all directions.)
- There can be no sharing of coffee, snacks, or meals before, during or after worship
- Bulletins cannot be distributed, each participant must pick up their own.



DONATIONS

- The offering plates cannot be passed hand to hand.
- Containers may be set out to receive donations, but those who count the offerings must wear gloves and a mask, sit 2 mt from each other and wash hands when finished..
- ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONTINUE monthly par or online donations.



CLEANING

- Regular cleaning must be done to a professional level (see CNEST guidelines)
- Frequently touched surfaces (eg pews, door handles, hand rails, light switches) must be cleaned after each gathering.
- Bathrooms must be thoroughly cleaned after each gathering.
- Alcohol-based sanitation products must be used and made available to users of the building.
- Consider opening only part of the building to reduce amount of cleaning necessary
- Remove Bibles and hymn books from the pews and any unnecessary object that could be manipulated (like magazines, leaflets or books)



SINGING

- Singing is a higher risk activity because droplets are projected further than when speaking. This is also true for coughing, laughing, and collective responses during worship.
- Music may be played and one person may sing, as long as a large separation is maintained between soloist and the congregation.
- Collective responses (Call to worship, Lord's Prayer) may be said with a quiet voice or may be avoided completely



SINGING (2)

- To avoid speaking loudly, anyone who addresses the gathering (minister or lay leader) should use a microphone; One mic per person, with careful cleaning between uses.
- Hymn books should not be shared. Individuals and families may use the same hymnbook for the duration of the pandemic.
- There is greater risk of infection when breathing deeply or laughing, so we are asked not to intentionally include those elements in worship



CELEBRATIONS

- Communion: may be celebrated if participants bring their own elements (bread and wine or juice)
- Baptisms are discouraged because of the difficulty of maintaining distance.
- Weddings and funerals may be celebrated in the sanctuary, with the same distancing and sanitation protocols. No food or drink may be served.





KEEPING EACH OTHER SAFE

- Inquire upon entry whether participants have symptoms (fever, cough etc) and if someone does not feel well, stay home.
- It is recommended that travellers practice a 14 day isolation period after a journey outside of Canada. That applies to church activities too!
- If you anticipate that the number of participants exceeds the limits, consider offering a second service so that you do not have to turn people away.



IN THE CASE OF AN OUTBREAK

- If someone tests positive for Covid-19 and has been at your church, the Santé Publique authorities may ask for information about what has taken place at your gatherings. Be prepared:
 - Keep a register of who attended, including their telephone number and where they sat. (photos, reserved seating etc) Everyone (congregation, employees, contractors etc) must register as they enter and leave the building.
 - Make sure your congregational contact list is up to date, including those who may not be formal members.

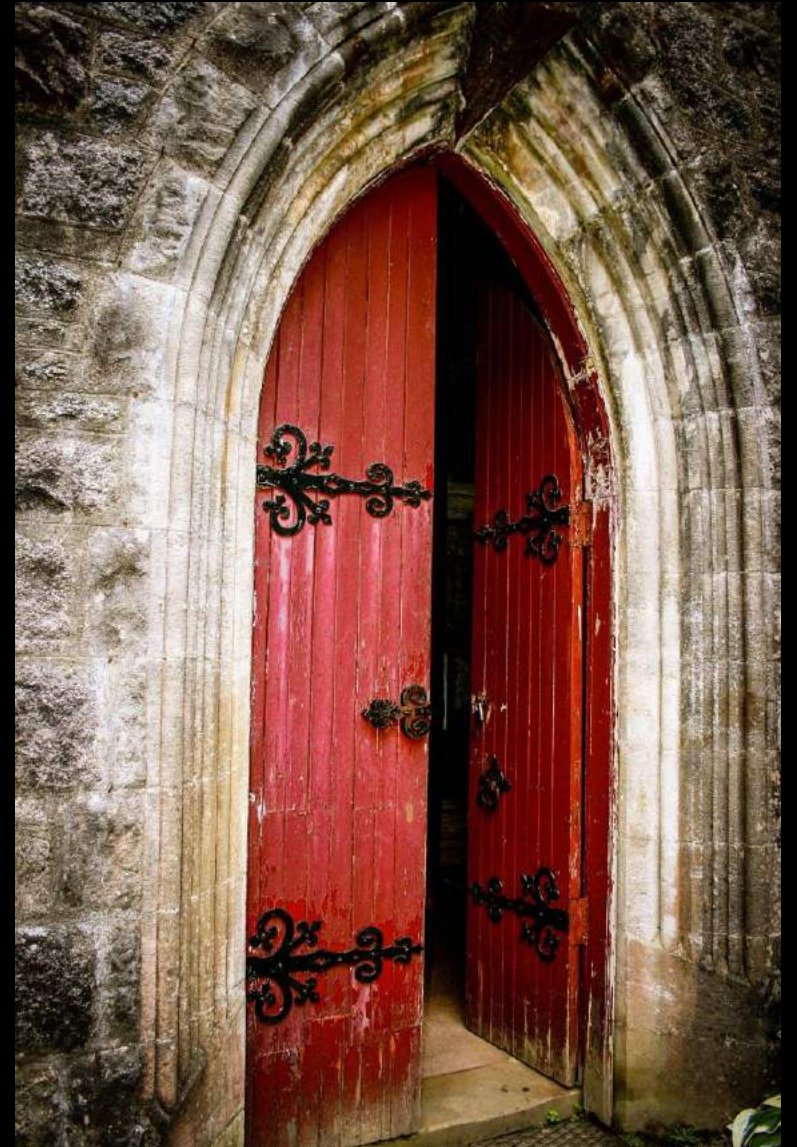


IN THE CASE OF AN OUTBREAK(2)

- Be prepared Santé Publique may ask about:
 - your congregational contact list; is it up to date, including those who may not be formal members?
 - your emergency plan; is it posted? Be prepared to show how it was followed.
 - a plan of the air circulation in the building (Air conditioning, fans, open windows etc)

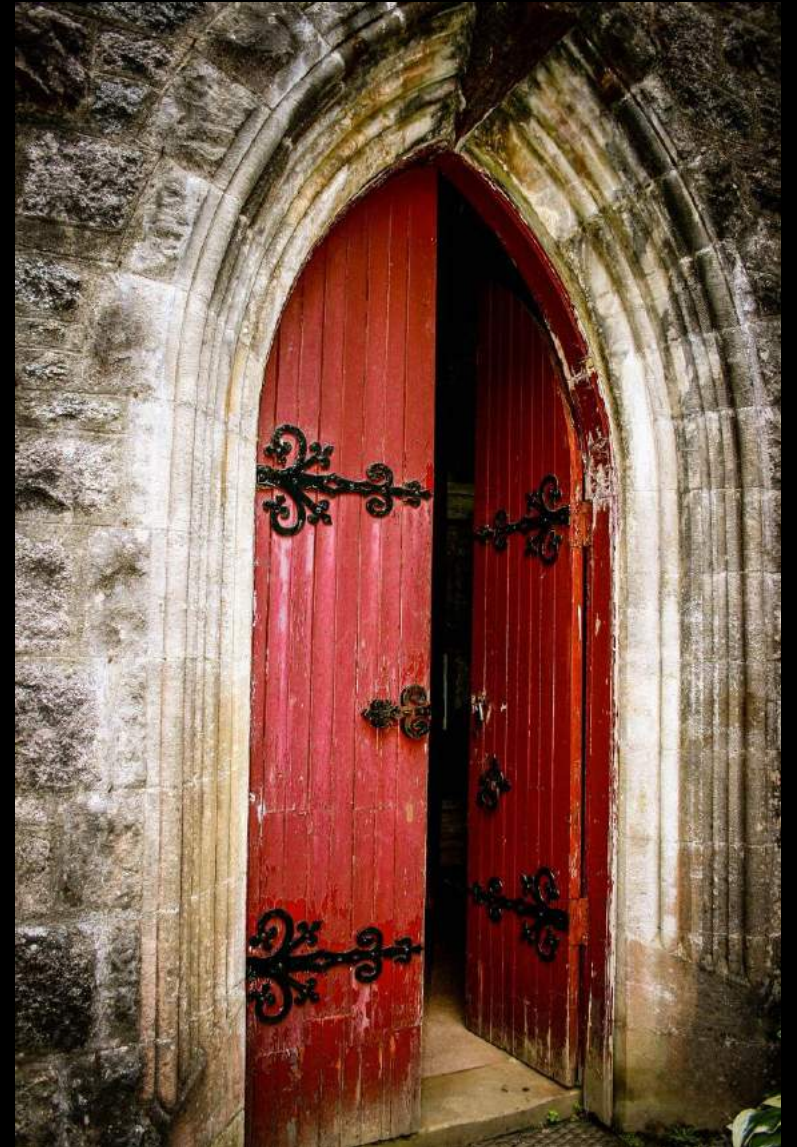
THE DECISION TO REOPEN THE BUILDING

- According to United Church polity, the decision to reopen is to be made by the council of each individual pastoral charge.
- The Nakonha:ka regional council requires that communities of faith submit a reopening plan for review before reopening.
- Strong recommendation not to reopen for worship before Labour Day.
- It is important to have a good communication plan for each community of faith, indicating what is expected by those who enter the building (signage, and maybe a pamphlet)



THE DECISION TO REOPEN THE BUILDING (2)

- Accomodation: don't forget that some employees, ministers and lay leaders may need accomodation because of their health situations (their own, or that of their family)
- Coordination between LAM communities?
- Alternate activities-
 - outdoor gatherings,
 - Worship combined with ZOOM,
 - test sites





TENANTS AND OTHERS

- It is the responsibility of the church council to assure that tenants and others are abiding by the protocols: distancing, size of gathering, prohibition of serving food, maintaining records of use, cleaning etc.
- AA, farmers' market, rentals, community concerts, etc must follow protocols, and provide a plan to the council as a condition of use.

QUESTIONS FOR CLARIFICATION





A TIME TO DREAM

Why do we want to gather?

What can we do?

(rather than what can't we do)