

The Corporation of Lorne Park Baptist Church COVID-19 Reopening Protocols and Guidelines

Over the past several months, we have learned much about what it means to be the church and how to be “a church without walls”. Even as we have gathered on Zoom for Sunday worship and mid-week groups, as we have gathered on the telephone for prayer and as we have connected one-on-one to stay in touch, we yearn for the time when we will be back together in community. As we begin to think about that time, there are a number of considerations we must resolve going forward to ensure the safety of our congregants, our staff and contractors, and our neighbours.

The Bottom Line

- We expect that COVID-19 will be present in the community for the foreseeable future and will continue to affect the way we deliver programs, meet together and how we will need to behave.
- Protocols and guidelines will be established, and modified going forward, by Executive Council, under the advisement of a Re-opening Advisory Team. The Team will provide current information and resources to provide for informed decision-making.
- These protocols and guidelines apply to all church programs and activities.
- During this pandemic, love of neighbor requires careful planning. Because we love God, we want to offer worship that brings our very best. Because we love our neighbors, we want to do everything we can to make sure we bring no harm to anyone when we gather. This requires that we will be cautious when gathering in-person and provide other options for those who are unable to or do not wish to take that risk.

Public Health Directives and Gradual Reopening

- The Advisory Team will be responsible for keeping up-to-date on the ever changing health directives and guidelines.
- At LPBC we will not just seek to meet the guidelines but will contextualize them with consideration to our demographics, the health/vulnerabilities of participants, and the limitations of our space. We will work within the guidelines provided, in the spirit in which they are set, and not try to find ways to work around them.
- As with the phased reopening within our community, we can expect that reopening of the church building and its programs will also take a phased approach. We will need to be aware of community outbreaks, reported cases within our church family and be prepared to slow or abandon the reopening if necessary.
- Following Public Health guidelines against the spread of COVID-19 will apply to all LPBC activities. These include:
 - Physical distancing as much as possible
 - Using face coverings at all times, except those under 2 years old, those with breathing difficulties, or those who are not able to remove a face covering on their own
 - Washing hands frequently or using hand sanitizer

- Staying home when we are ill, if we're especially vulnerable to COVID-19 or if we think we have been in contact with someone exhibiting signs of the disease or have travelled outside of Ontario in the past 14 days
- Limiting physical touching except when absolutely necessary
- Avoiding practices known to spread the virus more widely, such as congregational or choral singing, unison speaking, speaking loudly, shouting, and playing wind and brass instruments

Preopening considerations

1. Building preparedness

A. Cleaning

- Inspect building for mold and other issues
 - Flush water system
 - Run HVAC for 48 to 72 hours before occupancy [CDC guidance](#)
- Thoroughly disinfect all high touch surfaces (e.g. - pews, pulpits, microphones, tables, chairs, desks, keyboards, light switches, door handles)
- Remove all bibles, hymn books, cushions, and other items that are not easily cleaned
- Obtain and stock sufficient supplies of needed disinfectants for any activities that will be permitted indoors on church premises
- Provide hand sanitizer at all entrances and exits and within the sanctuary
- Obtain supply of face masks for those forget to bring one (small charge allowed)
- Obtain and stock soap and paper towels for washrooms and ensure they are checked frequently throughout the week
- Lift carpets in Nursery

B. Technology

- Webcasting will continue as a way to incorporate those who cannot attend services in-person
- Review equipment and internet service to ensure webcasting is technically feasible – engage a consultant to help do this right
- Purchase, install and test any new equipment required

C. Signage

- Obtain and post signs to inform or direct worshippers and guests
 - To maintain physical distancing
 - To wear non-medical mask or cloth face covering
 - About entrances and exits
 - About COVID-19 symptoms
 - fever
 - new or worsening cough

- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- nasal congestion or runny nose (without other known cause, such as seasonal allergies)
- fatigue
- headache
- chills
- red eyes
- How to wash and disinfect hands
- To maintain physical distancing in restrooms [still need specific guidelines]
- Printable signs available here <https://www.displays2go.ca/S-4316/covid-19-printable-signs>
- Adhesive floor signs for physical distancing can be purchased from Staples on-line

D. Entry/Exit

- Post signage on doors as required to match guidelines and protocols below
- Place markers on the ground outdoors in front of entry door at 6-foot intervals to ensure distancing is maintained between individuals and co-sheltering household groups on entry and exit.
- Place markers on the floors inside at 6-foot intervals showing path to sanctuary and restrooms.
- Encourage social distancing in the parking lot

2. What is a church program/meeting?

- Any group that meets on church property
- Any group that meets under the auspices of the church (eg – home groups)

3. Tracking attendance for contact tracing purposes

- A binder will be located on the counter in the church office. Everyone who enters is required to sign in and out (name, time in/time out, what area of church visited) for contact tracing purposes. No exceptions! Use your own pen.
- When on-site services begin, attendance will be taken upon entry to the building.

Phase 1 Reopening

1. Staff return to working at the church (permitted effective June 18, 2020)

- Staff will be required to log in and out daily to provide for contact tracing should it be necessary
- Physical distancing or use masks where this is not possible
- Washrooms will be assigned to reduce necessity for cleaning

- Leave doors open to reduce touching common surfaces
- Try to avoid sharing of books and other high-touch equipment as much as possible
- Stay home if you feel unwell or if someone in your immediate family is sick
- Continue one-on-one meetings and visitations by telephone/zoom
- Permit crisis visitation at hospitals/care facilities, with proper PPE, as institution's regulations allow

Phase 2 Reopening

1. Small group meetings and programs

- Small groups can begin to meet on-site or in homes
 - the number of attendees must adhere to the current Regulations (**limited to 10 ppl effective June 18, 2020**)
 - Physical distancing is still encouraged but if that is not possible then wear a mask
 - Attendance must be recorded and reported to the church office
 - Attendees should be encouraged to bring their own food and not share it with anyone else
 - The meeting should be adjourned immediately should someone become unwell and a report made to the church office

2. Staff visitation

- Staff and volunteers may visit one-on-one at peoples' homes (**effective date June 18, 2020**)
 - The number of people involved is limited to three people
 - Visitor screens for symptoms, travel and contact as per guidelines prior to visit
 - Physical distancing or masks must be used
 - Appropriate hand sanitization before and after visiting
 - The visit should be as short as possible
 - Visitations must be recorded and reported to the church office
 - Serving of food should be discouraged
 - The visit must be cancelled if someone is feeling unwell

Phase 3 Reopening

1. On-site worship resumes (TBD)

The number of attendees must adhere to the current Regulations (approx. 75)

A. Arrival

- Encourage physical distancing in the parking lot
- Enter only by front door on south side utilizing markings on sidewalk to keep appropriate distancing for family groupings
 - One volunteer to open door
 - One volunteer to take attendance

- One volunteer to provide hand sanitizer
- Elevator will not be available initially
- Proceed immediately to sanctuary and follow instructions provided by usher for seating

B. Worship service

- No congregational singing or readings
- No bulletins
 - Announcements should be sent by email on Friday and can be run pre-service on the screen
- Worship team
 - limited to two singers in addition to Charlotte
 - singers must remain 6' apart (markers on floor)
 - no sharing microphones
 - all microphones & music stands to be disinfected post-service
 - congregation should be encouraged to clap, tap their knee, wave hands or dance as appropriate – just don't sing!
- Hymns
 - Hymns played on organ without congregation singing
 - Small group could sing with appropriate distancing
- Readers/Announcements
 - Arrange service such that microphones do not need to be shared (ie – limit participants)
 - All microphones to be disinfected post-service
- Communion
 - Will not be served for now
- Offering
 - Preferred method of giving is by EFT Transfer, PAR or Canada Helps
 - Plate to be left on a table at entry door
 - Those who will not use electronic means will be encouraged to place their offering in the plate on their way into the sanctuary
 - Usher with mask and gloves may bring offering forward for prayer
 - Offering plate must be disinfected post-service
- Kidzone
 - Not offered initially
 - Activities (books, colouring, etc) should be brought from home
- Nursery
 - Not offered initially

C. Departure

- Everyone leaves sanctuary the same way they came in maintaining social distancing

- Parents proceed to pick-up their children from Nursery
- Kidzone children wait in lobby to meet parents
- Unless volunteering for after-service cleaning, everyone departs immediately to the parking lot
- Pastors may greet people outside during better weather, with mask

2. Weddings/Funerals

- The number of attendees must adhere to the current Regulations
- Participants must adhere to the guidelines for worship and others on the Ministry of Health website
- LPBC will provide volunteers to staff doors, elevator and subsequent disinfection of property – a fee may apply

3. Rentals

- Men's Bible Study – not allowed at this time because of use of whole building
- Spanish Congregation – to be negotiated whether they use auditorium or sanctuary – protocols for worship will apply – they will need to sign an agreement that they will follow these protocols and provide their own cleaning
- Film Industry – allowed with assurance of proper protocols in place