



BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF OTTAWA

June 17, 2020

A Template for the Safe Reopening of Our Churches

Dear Friends in Christ,

The provincial House of Bishops has decided that our churches will not be reopening for in-person worship until at least September. This decision was made in consultation with public health experts as well as our diocesan executive officers and chancellors, with the well-being and safety of all our parishioners and the communities we serve uppermost in our hearts and minds.

As we contemplate reopening safely, we offer a common template for Anglican dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, to be adapted locally as pandemic conditions in our communities warrant the safe reopening of our church buildings.

We recognize that a decision to move forward from one stage to another, or back to an earlier stage, will be affected by the course of the pandemic, which is dynamic; and that subsequent waves are possible, along with regional variations.

As things unfold, the Bishops will meet and consult regularly and will seek counsel from our advising epidemiologists: The Reverend Michael Garner (Public Health); Dr. Rob James (Consultant); and Dr. Bill Gardner (Research).

The enclosed template is unanimously endorsed by the provincial House of Bishops: The Most Reverend Anne Germond, The Right Reverend Michael Oulton, The Right Reverend Susan Bell, The Right Reverend Andrew Asbil, The Right Reverend Dr. Todd Townshend, The Right Reverend Shane Parker, The Right Reverend Peter Fenty, The Right Reverend Jenny Andison, The Right Reverend Riscylla Shaw, The Right Reverend Kevin Robertson, The Most Reverend Fred Hiltz.

A detailed reopening plan for our Diocese of Ottawa, based on this template, is in development. I expect to release the plan by the end of June. Rest assured that clergy and lay leaders will be fully briefed on the plan, and that we will move through the stages together as a diocesan church, standing in solidarity with one another and with Jesus, whom we will continue to steadfastly serve—regardless of when our buildings will reopen. If we love God and love our neighbours, we can be certain that all shall be well.

May the gentle peace of Christ be with you always.

The Right Reverend Shane A. D. Parker
Bishop of Ottawa

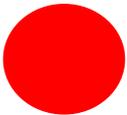


Loving Our Neighbours: A Template for the Safe Reopening of Our Church Buildings

The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario

All directives of the Government of Ontario (and Quebec, where applicable) and local public health authorities must be followed at all times, including the following foundational pandemic hygiene guidance: washing hands often; staying home if feeling ill; practising physical distancing and where not possible, wearing a face covering.

During all stages, **public health directives and diocesan guidelines must be followed** and rigorous deep cleaning and disinfecting must happen on a regular basis. Where discrepancies exist between local, provincial, diocesan guidelines and the template below, the more restrictive guideline should be followed.



RED STAGE

- Corporate worship continues to be livestreamed or pre-recorded and made available online.
- Small weddings, funerals and emergency baptisms are permitted.
- One on one, in-person essential pastoral care by clergy and pastoral visitors is permitted.
- Offices may reopen for staff and lay leaders where physical distancing is possible.
- Small meetings may occur where physical distancing is possible; online options are preferred whenever possible.
- Vital food security and community ministries to vulnerable populations are permitted to operate, with appropriate diocesan/local public health approval.
- Church buildings are closed to the public, except in circumstances where tenants or licensees are permitted to operate according to provincial, local, and diocesan guidelines.
- Food and beverages are not to be served or shared.



AMBER STAGE

- Corporate worship may be conducted in-person; the wearing of face coverings is strongly encouraged, unless contraindicated:
 - The Eucharist may be celebrated, with distribution of the bread only.
 - Singing by soloists or small ensemble/ small choir may be permitted with appropriate physical distancing. No congregational singing.
 - The Peace will be shared using non-contact gestures from pews.
- Online services continue to be offered in addition to in-person worship.
- Larger in-person meetings may resume where physical distancing is possible.
- Food and beverages are not to be served or shared at coffee hours, meetings, pot-lucks.
- Routine pastoral care visits may resume, observing heightened hygiene practices.



GREEN STAGE

- Corporate worship continues to be conducted in-person:
 - The Eucharist may be celebrated, with communion in both kinds (no intinction).
 - Choir and congregational singing fully resumes.
 - The sharing of the Peace and other liturgical practices resume with modifications.
- Online services may continue as an extension of our worship life.
- Meetings, coffee hours, hall rentals, and social and fundraising events may resume.