

***In This Together at All Saints' Westboro –
A Plan for In-Person Services in the Amber Stage
August, 2020***

Introduction

COVID-19 continues to circulate in our community. Public Health officials are urging us all to be vigilant until there is an effective vaccine readily and widely available. At this point, there is no clear timeline for when that will happen. Therefore, All Saints' Westboro, along with its sister parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, needs to embrace a new way of worshipping and gathering in the months ahead.

Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20). Communal worship is always of value, no matter how few are present. We will endeavour make in-person worship as safe as possible while also providing live online worship to ensure our entire church family is included in our services.

We have a significant duty of care to the congregation and a responsibility to mitigate and limit risks. We do not want one single case of COVID-19 traced to our congregation because we failed to care for those who gather with us. By following our Diocesan plan, we are preparing for limited in-person Sunday worship while continuing to provide worship and connection to our entire faith community.

This document was prepared by the ASW Pandemic Planning Team: Amy Castle, Debbie Holzman, Doug Fisher, Julie Newlands, Helen Norman, and the Rev. Simone Hurkmans. We are working in close concert with our partner congregation, First United to ensure that our re-opening is a shared effort.

Informing all our decisions is the goal of ensuring that All Saints' is a welcoming place of fellowship, communion, and inclusion.

The safety of all church members as well as staff and those served by this faith community needs to be at the centre of any decisions not clearly defined by our Diocesan plan. Some questions that inform these decisions include:

- What is the need that we are trying to respond to?
- Do our decisions serve that need in a way that respects our faith, principles and values?
- Are fears factoring into our decision (i.e. losing members or money)?
- What is the impact of our decisions on our most vulnerable members?
- Where are the signs of hope? Where might we find new life?
- What shall we do differently, and how shall we live differently as we work through the pandemic, and emerge into this new season?

In This Together

The Anglican Diocese of Ottawa's plan is called *In This Together* and serves as our guide as we begin offering in-person worship and beyond. It has been circulated to the congregation and can be found at the following website:

<https://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19>

In This Together outlines four stages: **Red**, **Amber**, **Yellow** and **Green**.

ASW, as well as all the parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, has been in the **Red Stage** since mid-March, 2020:

- Our services have been pre-recorded and shared online weekly. Our church building has been closed to the public.
- The church office is closed and staff have worked from home. Staff have come in to the office to check mail and arrange for bank deposits. Masks have been worn and physical distancing maintained.
- Committee meetings and small group meetings have taken place as needed online.
- The Food Bank has remained open, operating with reduced volunteers and implementing masking and physical distancing practices.

On September 1, barring any announcement to the contrary between now and then, the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa will transition to the **Amber** Stage. The rest of this document serves to outline policies, procedures and practices that will shape our church life during this **Amber** stage.

We ask for your patience and flexibility as we navigate this new reality together. Our plans will need adjusting as we gain experience offering in-person worship while also sharing our worship online.

Sunday Morning Worship

- One Anglican Sunday worship service will be offered each week at 9:30 am. The 8 am Sunday service and the Wednesday 10 am service will initially not be offered, and may be re-instituted once we feel the Sunday 9:30 am service is running smoothly.
- We will begin in-person worship slowly and cautiously, beginning with 15 people attending on the first Sunday of in-person worship, Sunday, September 6. We will gradually add more people each week, working our way up to a maximum number of 50 people, including clergy, musicians, sides-people and anyone else assisting with worship.
- The 9:30 am worship service will be live-streamed and recorded, so that it can be viewed either live on Sunday morning at 9:30 am or at a later date. Instructions for participating in online worship will be sent via clergy's weekly email and will be available on the ASW website.
- In-person church attendees will not be visible on the online broadcast unless actively participating in leading worship, i.e. readers or soloists.

Pre-Registration

- Everyone attending a service must pre-register using an online form found on the ASW website, or by calling the church office. Registration will open on Monday mornings at 9 am for the following Sunday and be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Once the Sunday service is full, a waitlist will be created. Those on the waitlist will be offered first priority for registration for the following Sunday.
- Names and contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) must be provided for contact tracing. We will keep this information secure.
- Desired social grouping will also be requested upon registration for seating purposes.
- We are mindful that as a church, part of our role is to welcome everyone to our worship. However, in these challenging times there will be very limited capacity to welcome strangers to our services. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a decision is made on a Sunday morning to allow a newcomer to attend a service, that person must provide contact information and abide by the same requirements as those who have pre-registered. Before arriving at church, attendees are asked to self-assess for any of the usual symptoms of COVID-19 and to stay home if they are feeling unwell.

On Sunday Morning – Arriving

- Sunday morning protocols, including cleaning procedures outlined by Public Health and the *In This Together* plan for the building will be adhered to when the building is open for public use, as per **Appendix A**. This is a working document shared with our partner congregation, First United.
- Attendees should enter the church at the Richmond Road (courtyard) door. They should exit using the same door. The rest of the church will be closed to public use. The washroom at the back of the sanctuary will be the only one available.
- Masks must be worn at all times by all participants while inside the church. The only exception to this is that masks may be briefly removed when receiving Holy Communion (see below).
- It is preferable that attendees bring their own mask. Masks will be available for those who do not bring their own.
- Outdoor clothing must stay with the attendee; clothing cannot be hung up.
- All visitors must sanitize their hands upon entry and exit. Hand sanitizer made with at least 60% alcohol will be available at the entrance and exit and throughout the church.
- Households and individuals must keep at least two metres apart in all directions from other households or individuals at all times.
- Pre-registration will allow for indicating which attendees are part of the same household. A seating chart will indicate where each pre-registered attendee is to sit. Note that this may not be your “regular pew”! Once seated, moving around the room will be strongly discouraged.
- A service bulletin, prepared with sufficient sanitizing precautions, will be made available and will be self-serve. All hymn books and bibles will be removed from

the pews.

On Sunday Morning – During the Service

- Well-ventilated spaces are safer - doors and windows will be open when possible.
- There will be no physical touching during any part of the service or before or afterwards. This includes sharing the Peace (although exchanging the Peace without touching will be encouraged).
- To minimize multiple people using the same microphone and lectern, one reader will be assigned per service and will read the two first lessons as well as lead the Prayers of the People. The person offering the homily will read the Gospel.
- Parishioners are encouraged to donate their offerings through pre-approved withdrawal or online. Any offerings placed in the Sunday collection plate will be left untouched for 72 hours before handling. The person counting the collection should wear gloves.
- Neither the congregation nor the officiant are allowed to sing, and wind and brass instruments are not permitted. If a cantor or soloist is to sing, they must also wear a mask and maintain physical distance.
- Sunday school and the nursery will not be available. Children will be required to stay with their families in their pews. The play area/craft table for children at the back of the church will not be available.
- Baptisms may occur during a Sunday service with the additional provision that a separate bowl of water should be used for each candidate during baptisms.
- No coffee hour or hospitality is to be provided.

On Sunday Morning – Holy Communion

- All surfaces, vessels and hands will be sanitized before and after the Eucharist.
- The celebrant will wear a mask at all times and will sanitize their hands just before the Eucharistic Prayer and again before the distribution of communion.
- The celebrant will consecrate a priest's host and individual wafers for those receiving communion. The wafers will be covered and placed on the side of the altar during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- After the breaking of the bread, the celebrant will receive communion in both kinds (from the priest's host and the consecrated wine) and will put on their mask afterwards.
- The celebrant will then sanitize their hands again and distribute the consecrated wafers to those receiving, making sure not to touch their hands. The celebrant will bring Communion to those receiving in their pews.
- Communion will be in one kind only: wafers. The celebrant will be the only communion ministrant.
- People should remove their masks briefly to consume the wafer, and should sanitize their hands before and after. A helper will precede the priest while another will follow the priest, each with a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- After all have received communion, the celebrant will sanitize their hands again.

During the Week

- In-person small group gatherings are not permitted.
- Funerals and weddings may occur in the church building following the protocols outlined for in-person worship.
- Office staff can work in the church office, but are encouraged to continue working from home as much as possible. First and All Saints' staff will stagger their use of the office as much as possible. Masks must be worn while working in the office/choir room if other persons are present and physical distancing protocols must be maintained.
- A log-book of those who are in the office/choir room must be maintained.
- Staff will ensure frequent sanitization of high-touch areas, such as counter tops, doorknobs, and photocopier.
- Where possible, pastoral care should be done over the phone or online, but if it is done in person, hands must be sanitized, masks worn and physical distancing kept.
- Non-church group gatherings and rentals may resume on a case-by-case basis, with the number of participants restricted to 1/3 of the room capacity or 50, whichever is less. Groups should provide a written declaration stating they will safely maintain masking, sanitizing, registering and physical distancing protocols.
- The Food Bank will continue its operations using its protocols developed for its operation during the **Red** Stage.

Beyond the **Amber** stage are the **Yellow** and **Green** stages, with restrictions being progressively lifted for each subsequent stage. ASW will follow the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa's *In This Together* plan when moving to subsequent stages. Again, details on each stage is available in the *In This Together* document:

<https://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19>

Appendix A: Sunday Morning Protocol in the Amber Stage – All Saints' Anglican and First United Churches

See attached document (evolving document shared with First United).