



**CONSEIL RÉGIONAL  
DE L'OUTAOUAIS ET DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO  
EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS  
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## **COVID-19: Reopening our Churches for In-Person Worship**

**March 15, 2021**

With the ongoing presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Communities of Faith are asking advice concerning whether or not they should plan to reopen for in-person worship and, if they reopen, what guidelines need to be followed that this may be done safely.

Our Communities of Faith in Ontario may look for relevant information by using the following links:

- [COVID-19 public health measures and advice | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit <https://eohu.ca>
- Ottawa Public Health [www.ottawapublichealth.ca](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca)
- Renfrew County & District health Unit [www.rcdhu.com](http://www.rcdhu.com)
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health [www.kflaph.ca](http://www.kflaph.ca)

Our Communities of Faith in the Outaouais may look for relevant information by using this link:

- [Measures in force | Gouvernement du Québec \(quebec.ca\)](#)

Both the Quebec and Ontario governments have provided regulations regarding the number of people allowed for indoor worship, as well as the requirement to maintain proper physical distancing at the same time. These restrictions apply to all United Church congregations. It is best to contact your local Health Unit (see links above) as to specific local regulations and recommendations regarding proper procedures and precautions that should be taken if a Community of Faith is deciding to resume in-person worship.

I would also remind our EOORC Communities of Faith that last summer or fall proposals outlining the steps that would be followed in order to reopen the sanctuaries for worship were sent in to the Regional Council. These steps included limited capacity and distancing as per provincial regulations, as well as other precautionary actions which include but not restricted to: sanitizing all contact points before and after worship; wearing of masks by all congregants, no physical contact, no congregational or choral singing, screening questions upon entry, recording of attendance for tracing purposes, no passing of offering plates, no use of hymnbooks, no traditional sharing of Communion, no coffee hour.

Upon reopening, it is also important to inform your cleaners regarding which parts of the building are being used.

While vaccinations are slowly taking place, this is not the time to be lax in taking precautions. Things are far from being back to normal. For the safety of our congregations and communities, please follow all local and provincial regulations.

Be positive. Test negative. Be vaccinated. Stay safe.

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