

River Drive Park Bible Chapel

Summary of Return-to-Meetings Covid-19 Policy

Updated October 3, 2020

In-person gatherings for prayer and worship are still permitted with certain conditions, as described in the York Region guidance document [COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP, Aug28/20](#). However, some confusion ensued when new regulations were introduced by the provincial government, effective Saturday, September 19, 2020. You may read these on the York Region website by scrolling down to the section on [Public Gatherings](#). Note that there are reduced numbers for **unmonitored and private** social gatherings. A conversation with York Region Public Health officers on September 22, 2020 allowed our elders to receive direct clarification about our meetings. It was stated that we must abide by the maximum 30% occupancy for any given room in the building when indoors, NOT the reduced numbers that apply to unmonitored gatherings. As well, it was made clear that it is our responsibility to ensure that congregants maintain physical distancing at all times when on the church grounds. This applies to people's arrival, activity during the service, the short break time between services and departure. We have carefully considered this with respect to how we have re-established our face-to-face activities, and using these directives have introduced a few changes to this document. Please read it carefully.

While we encourage all who are able to return to face-to-face meetings, some assembly members are older and/or have chronic medical conditions so we will continue to provide online ZOOM services in addition to in-person services. As the spread of infection is brought under further control, or increases, further revisions and guidance will be issued. The situation is quite fluid, so we are proceeding cautiously, with the updated procedures below. The government has introduced new restrictions that apply to Toronto, Ottawa and Peel regions as of October 3, 2020, so we are monitoring and waiting to see what changes might be legislated that could impact us. To date, the procedures that are outlined below are in compliance with current government policy for our region.

It is mandated by government that all places of worship must adhere to the appropriate emergency orders under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, particularly [Stage 3: O. Reg 364/20](#), as well as any new directives. In order to do so, we are implementing the following requirements:

- The chapel will limit participation in services/activities to no more than **44 people in the Auditorium** (30% of its capacity). If this number is reached, **up to 50 additional people**, may be seated in the Fellowship Hall and will be able to participate via a ZOOM hub that will be set up in that room.
- **Physical distancing of 2 m/6 feet must be maintained** all times when people are arriving, departing, or in the building. Our gathering is viewed as one event, so whether people are indoors or outdoors, physical distancing is to be maintained while on the chapel grounds.
- **Pedestrian traffic-flow markings are on the floor and separated seating is in place to help maintain a distance of 2-metres between all persons** as much as possible. Some chairs are placed together for the seating of family groups or individuals within a social circle. When you arrive, you will be seated in an appropriate area by an usher. Do not rearrange chairs. If necessary, this will be done by an usher to allow for unexpected groupings or visitors.
- **All people entering River Drive Park Bible Chapel must wear a face mask.** Until further notice from the government, we are mandated to prohibit people from entering if they are not wearing a face

mask or covering. Disposable masks will be made available for those who arrive without their own.

- **Do not attend if you are sick.** Before you make a decision to attend a service at the chapel, please perform [Covid-19 Self-Assessment](#) for all family members. If you or anyone in your family has any of the symptoms listed below, please stay home and join us via ZOOM.

Do you have any of the common symptoms of Covid-19?

- Fever, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath?

Do you have any other symptoms of Covid-19 that can include:

- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing, new smell or taste disorder(s), nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion(unrelated to seasonal allergies) ?

In the last 14 days, have any members of your family:

- Travelled outside Canada, including the United States?

- Had close contact with a person with a confirmed or probable Covid-19 case?

- Had close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been outside of Canada, including the United States?

If you or any members of a family group answer YES to any of the criteria listed, then please stay home. If you arrive and did not self-assess at home, there is a poster on the entrance door asking you to do a Covid-19 self assessment before entering the building. If any individual or family member in a group answers YES to any of criteria, they will not be permitted to enter the building. You should return home immediately, self isolate and follow the government's published health guidelines for next steps. You are still encouraged to participate in services from home via ZOOM.

- **Attendance will be recorded when you enter.** If a case of illness occurs in you or your family at a later date, after you have attended a service, please [contact one of the elders or deacons](#). This information can then be used by York Region Public Health to establish contact lists should it be necessary to notify other participants.
- **Hand sanitizer will be provided for people to use.** Please make use of it when you enter the building, while inside and when you leave. The Chapel will use enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces, including all doors and knobs and washroom facilities. Interior doors, with the exception of the washrooms, will be propped open so that people do not have to make contact with these surfaces. Individuals are expected to use proper hand hygiene and are encouraged to cleanse their hands prior to and after touching any surfaces.
- **Washroom use is limited to one person at a time.** As most of us do at home, knock before entering and wait your turn if the room is occupied. Parents may assist their own children in the washroom.
- **New procedures are in place for the sharing of the emblems during the breaking of bread service.** There are new individual-use packets that include both a wafer and juice to be picked up by individuals from the front table upon entering. Participants will be responsible to open their own packet, and later dispose of the used packaging in the garbage on the way out of the auditorium, after the service concludes.
- **We will limit singing to one or two songs in our services.** Hymn books have been removed from the chair racks and will not be handed out. Words for hymns will be projected when necessary.
- **Please sing and speak with low volume.** We will provide access to a microphone on a stand to amplify the voice of whoever is praying, sharing or reading during the service. If you are conversing with

someone and you can not hear them or they can not hear you, please do not move closer to each other, rather, increase your speaking volume.

- **You are encouraged to contribute your tithes and offerings through electronic means.** A collection will not take place during the service. If you would still like to use cash or cheques, they may be deposited in a no-touch collection box that is at the front of the chapel.
- **Proper respiratory etiquette must be followed.** Cough into a sleeve or use a facial tissue as well as wearing a mask/face-covering when inside the chapel building. Please wash your hands with soap and water and/or sanitize them as required.
- **Physical touch with those who are not in your immediate family or social circle is strongly discouraged.** Although we are a close-knit group that operates much of the time like an extended family, we will **NOT** be shaking hands or welcoming people with a hug. Some of our children will find this unusual, so it is up to parents to instruct their children on these procedures.
- **Drinks and snacks will not be served between meetings.** If you would like to bring your own snacks or drinks, they must not be shared. All garbage must be disposed of in the provided receptacles.

While this may seem like a lot to remember, the basics are amazingly simple:

**Stay home if you are sick – Wear a face mask – Use physical distancing
Cough into a sleeve or tissue - Sanitize hands frequently**

GOD IS IN CONTROL, AND WE ARE TRYING TO DO OUR PART IN LOVING HIM AND EACH OTHER!