



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE  
MONTREAL

Revised Guidelines for  
Phase III Worship  
in the Diocese of Montreal

September 13, 2021



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Dear People of the Diocese of Montreal,

Greetings and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the provincial government and Quebec Public Health update us on requirements for places of worship, these updates are posted on the Diocesan website under the Covid-19 Response tab. All of the updates since January 2020 are archived on the web so that you can refer to any direction that the Diocese has provided that both reflects our Anglican situation in the Diocese of Montreal and conforms to the provincial public health requirements.

As you will note from perusing the archive of notices, the guidelines have changed over the last 2 years with some things being suspended that had been previously permitted and some things being permitted that were previously suspended. Things change constantly as we understand the effects of the virus and as we move towards increased levels of vaccinated population.

**Our objective is still to act with an abundance of caution.** What you will find in this document is simply the revised Phase III guidelines pulling all the recent adjustments into one area for your convenience. Our approach should still be one that aims to care for people, communities, and each other after a time of remaining in our homes for the sake of stemming the spread of COVID-19.

If you have any questions regarding the guidelines after you have reviewed them, please do not hesitate to contact me or the bishop for further clarification.

Blessings,

Archdeacon Robert Camara

The information on these pages has been gathered on the basis of current knowledge and direction from our public health authorities. Parishes and individual congregations must be prepared to respond quickly to new public health orders or diocesan directives, in the event of changing circumstances or spikes in infection.

**Remember that your parish does not have to move to a particular phase on the same timing as other parishes do, but you may not move to the next phase until my office informs you that you may do so.** Every parish, its buildings and congregations, its capacities and its leadership are different. **Each parish, therefore, using this document must discern the appropriate actions and timing for itself in terms of when to reopen its building or buildings and what activities to offer.** If you have any questions about this document or the process for re-opening, please contact the Vicar General or your Territorial Archdeacon.

You and all the parishes are in my prayers during this season of many decisions and many opportunities as we work through how best to support our parishes, our people and our communities in this unprecedented time.

Yours faithfully,

*+ Mary Montreal*

*Please note that clergy and lay leaders involved with pastoral or liturgical responsibilities in other institutions should follow the recommendations and guidelines of that institution regarding the use of space and ability to exercise ministry in that context. Where those guidelines are silent on the exercise of any particular aspect of pastoral or liturgical ministry in your context, you may use this document and current government health guidelines to assist your decision making process on what is possible during the pandemic.*

*Please also note that as the government of Quebec and local public health officials provide details about restrictions, guidelines and recommendations, updates will be issued and posted online for convenience.*

*Finally, please note that this document was prepared with the intention of providing guidelines for the Anglican churches in the geographical region of the entire diocese, which includes urban, suburban, and rural diversity. We recognize that not all scenarios may have been considered, and, certainly as the pandemic evolves, restrictions may relax or tighten in areas at different rates. If you are unsure about any of the guidelines or their application in a particular scenario, please contact the Vicar General or your Territorial Archdeacon.*

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# Phase III: Greater In-Person Participation

## Overview

During Phase III, parishes are allowed to celebrate Holy Eucharist, with **only the celebrant receiving the Sacrament in both kinds**. Everyone else present will be invited to receive the **bread only**, via individual wafers. The use of individual cups, for hygienic or other reasons, is not sanctioned. Worship services are limited to a greater number of attendees than in Phase II (see Guidelines for Re-Opening of Church Buildings – June 2020). Additionally, a greater range of in-person activities is allowed. In all activities, with the exception of the distribution of communion which must be done using strict protocols, parishes must continue physical distancing as well as all the other precautions to inhibit the spread of infection.

Vulnerable parishioners may still prefer to participate online only.

As with Phase II, in order to move to Phase III the Incumbent, and Church Wardens are required to have answered or to have revisited the questions listed in Appendix A. Once these conversations have taken place, they must have completed the questionnaire/application in Appendix B and return it to the Bishop's Office to receive any comments and to have been given permission to implement the Parish's plan. **Note that the questionnaire need only be submitted once, for Phases II and III. If you have already submitted an application that provided for Phase III – with Eucharistic worship – you do not need to re-submit an application.**

## Preparing the Church for Wider Use of the Building

Prior to expanding the wider use of church buildings by more people and groups, the parish must provide for the sanitization of the church building with special attention to areas of the building that will now be open to in-person gatherings. Pay special attention to high touch areas including pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, stair railings, and microphones. Please see the current cleaning guidelines from the Government of Canada<sup>1</sup> and Government of Quebec<sup>2</sup> Public Health Departments.

## Phase III: Worship Requirements and Recommendations

In Phase III parishes may offer in-person worship while adhering to the following requirements and recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/covid-19/environment/surface-cleaning>

## Phase III Requirements for In-person Worship:

- During Phase III parishes may offer Holy Eucharist (subject to the requirements below) or some form of the Daily Office or worship focusing on readings, preaching, prayers and music.
- All attendees must wear a procedural mask or face covering (unless medical reasons limit such use).
- There is no physical touching during any portion of in-person worship. This includes physically sharing the Peace (although, exchanging the Greeting of Peace, without physical contact, is encouraged).
- Any processions in the liturgy must provide for social distancing among clergy and among participants in the procession and congregants.
- There is no passing of an offering plate through the pews. To limit contact parishioners may offer financial gifts online or to a stationary plate as they come in or during worship.
- Households must sit at least two metres apart from other households or individuals, 360°, if gathered for in-person worship.
- If the person preaching or reading a lesson is distanced from the congregation (more than 2 meters) and is the only one using the space (ie not multiple people using the same microphone or lectern) than they may remove their mask while doing so. However, if more than one person is using the same space or is not able to maintain distance, than a mask or face covering must be worn.
- If a person is sitting in their pew and not saying anything, they may remove their face covering while remaining silent. Once the person stands and participates in worship by responding or singing, a face covering must be worn.
- Congregational singing is permitted. Individuals in the congregation must wear masks while singing.
- Choirs are also permitted to sing under the following conditions:
  - Masks are not required, but each singer must maintain a minimum distance of two metres from each other or be separated by a physical barrier (a full partition) and must be situated further from other worship participants than even the normal two-metre physical distancing guidelines (in theaters, there are at least 3 meters between the soloists and the first row of spectators);
  - After each service, the floor of the work area of each singer must be cleaned.
- Music using wind or brass instruments is prohibited during this phase.
- Outdoor services are permitted, to a maximum of 250 participants, so long as physical distancing and the other protocols related to places of worship are respected. If an enclosure like a tent is used, the maximum number of participants is 50. The only advantage to outdoor services, if desired, is the ability to (possibly) accommodate more participants.

## Requirements for Gathering Size and Contact in Worship

- During this phase any in-person worship gatherings must be limited to no more than 250 people, or 50% of the capacity of the worship space while following distancing guidelines of separation between households, whichever is fewer. If your building cannot accommodate your average Sunday attendance, consider multiple service times that might spread out the number of people gathered at any one moment or consider worshipping in the (perhaps larger) parish hall.
- To avoid crowding and bottle necks, there is no receiving line following a service. Continue encouraging people to leave the building rather than mingling in-person.
- Programming for children and youth is permissible as long as physical distancing and sanitizing protocols are followed<sup>3</sup>. Nurseries are not permissible during this Phase.
- All common surfaces must be cleaned before and after worship, including doorknobs, counter tops, pews, bathrooms (if used at all) and electronics.

## Requirements for the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

- All sanitization of spaces, vessels and peoples' hands must occur before and after the Eucharist.
- The altar can be set at a Eucharistic service by someone who is not the celebrant, ensuring that they sanitize their hands prior to handling the elements. During the consecration, only the celebrant should handle the communion elements, having also sanitized their hands. If it is desired, someone other than the celebrant may handle the communion elements after the distribution of communion, following proper hand sanitization and while wearing a face covering.
- Immediately prior to the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer and immediately prior to the distribution of communion the celebrant is required to wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- The celebrant should consecrate a priest's host for the celebrant to consume and consecrate individual wafers for those receiving communion. The wafers (regular and gluten-free) for the people are to be covered and placed to the side of the altar during the consecration.
- After the breaking of the bread, the celebrant should consume the priest's host and the consecrated wine.
- The celebrant then must sanitize their hands again and distribute the bread to those receiving; making sure not to touch the hands of those receiving the bread. The celebrant should bring communion to those wishing to receive.
- Communion must be in one kind only. The celebrant must be the only communion ministrant. The use of individual cups, for hygienic or other reasons, is not sanctioned.
- After all have received bread, the celebrant must sanitize their hands again.
- The parish must maintain a visitor log (including phone numbers and/or email addresses) for all who enter the building in the event that they may have come in contact with someone with the disease and reporting is required. To the extent possible, the log

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/services-de-garde-educatifs-a-lenfance-dans-le-contexte-de-la-covid-19#c79393>

should be managed by a greeter or an office staff-person or volunteer or follow some other no-touch method.

## Requirements for Other Services

Baptisms, weddings, and funerals may continue and must be limited to fewer than 250 people in attendance, while following physical distancing and sanitization guidelines.

Funerals and weddings may have a maximum of 250 people in attendance (and remain stationary) or 50% of the capacity of the worship space while following distancing guidelines of separation between households, whichever is fewer. A record of those in attendance must be kept for the purposes of contact tracing. In the case of funerals, condolences may be received in the church before the funeral, but no more than 50 people may be in the church building at any given time (or 50% of the capacity of the worship space while following distancing guidelines of separation between households, whichever is fewer).

## Recommendations for Worship

We recommend the following as you plan worship during Phase III

- We recommend closing bathrooms except for emergency use. After each use, we recommend the bathroom must be re-sanitized.
- We recommend maintaining some online worship and formation opportunities for those that will still be unable to join an in-person gathering, either due to risk or sense of safety.
- We recommend avoiding crowding in the sanctuary and building to the extent possible. Consider offering multiple services to help people spread out.
- We recommend inviting people to sign-up for services in advance while allowing space for visitors who may drop in.
- We recommend continuing to offer clear markers and spacing for seating to maintain social distancing.
- We recommend continuing to increase ventilation (doors and windows open where possible)
- We recommend continuing to consider removing prayer books, hymn books and bibles from pew racks during this time. Worship services may be followed using single-use bulletins (that are picked up rather than handed out), by sending a digital copy for people to access on their personal devices, or by the use of screen and projection. Please make every provision for recycling single-use bulletins and limiting the number of bulletins printed for one household.
- We recommend having a plan for dismissing the congregation in an orderly way to ensure social distancing as people exit.
- We recommend empowering greeters to remind participants about these guidelines and Provincial health requirements.



- We recommend having a plan to reduce the number of doors that people must touch to enter your service, including the use of door stops or greeters.

### Phase III: Formation, Fellowship, Fund-Raising and Pastoral Care

During this phase formation, fellowship, fund-raising efforts and some pastoral care may be done via in-person small group meetings or one-on-one meetings.

- Bible Studies and other group formation may be conducted in-person in groups of 250 or under that observe physical distancing, or 50% of the capacity of the meeting space while following distancing guidelines of separation between households, whichever is fewer. At this time, we require these meetings to be held in church buildings and not in peoples' homes.
- Fellowship (coffee hours, socials, lunches, dinners, interest group gatherings) may be conducted and parishes must make every provision to ensure adequate space to avoid crowding. A gloved person must distribute any food or drink. Buffets and self-serve food or drink are not permitted. Coffee and other beverages may be served after services, but serving oneself from a common urn, pot, or pitcher is not permitted. Rather a designated server must pour and otherwise prepare each beverage. Similarly, food can only be shared if it is served to individuals at their seat and/or it is prepared in a self-contained box or wrapper ahead of time. The maximum number of people permitted to participate in a post-service coffee hour are 25 if indoors, 50 if outdoors.
- Some pastoral care may be done in one-on-one meetings in the church building as long as social distancing is adhered to. In-person visiting in hospital, CHSLD, prison and other residential/care facilities is permitted if approved by the institution's management and in accordance with their instructions.
- Clergy and lay leaders should continue to coordinate care of those in hospital or other institutions with chaplains and spiritual care professionals.
- Home visits are not permitted at this time without the permission of the Bishop.

## Phase III: Office Building Use Requirements and Recommendations

In Phase III in-person meetings are permitted. We advise considering how you might enable your high-risk members to join your meetings digitally.

Regular office operations are permitted. We advise considering how you might maintain flexibility for staff members that are immunocompromised, have children unable to attend school or access childcare, or are over 60.

Communal spaces must continue to be cleaned on a regular basis, including before and after gatherings.

Any staff members or volunteers working from church-owned buildings must continue to follow physical distancing and sanitary guidelines, including:

- Maintaining two metres of separation between individuals
- Regular hand-washing and sanitizer use
- Regular disinfection of common surfaces including doorknobs, countertops, and office electronics.

## Phase III: Building Use by User Groups and Rentals

- During this time the use of church buildings by all user groups, including 12-step groups and all rentals is permissible if the numbers of people at one time are 250 or under, or 50% of the capacity of the meeting space while following distancing guidelines of separation between households, whichever is fewer. We recommend that parishes only open to those groups that they can safely accommodate at this phase given physical distancing, hand-washing and sanitization protocols. All user groups will be asked to sign a declaration of compliance with safe procedures.<sup>4</sup>
- Licensed Child-care providers are permitted to resume or continue their operations.

## Phase III: Other Recommendations

We recommend that parishes continue displaying signs outlining COVID-19 symptoms and urging people to stay home/seek medical attention if they experience symptoms or feel unsafe.

We recommend parishes continue to maintain appropriate stocks of tissue, soap, hand sanitizer, and disposable paper towels for drying hands.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.montreal.anglican.ca/covid19-response>

## Phase III: Service and Outreach

- Food programs continue to follow [the process and guidelines](#)<sup>5</sup> already developed and must receive the approval of the Bishop's Office to operate during this time.
- Outside organizations using church kitchens for food programs must continue to read and sign [a letter of indemnification](#)<sup>6</sup>.
- Other in-person service and outreach programs must follow all physical distancing and sanitization protocols and must gain approval from the Bishop's Office to operate during this time.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.montreal.anglican.ca/covid19-response>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.montreal.anglican.ca/covid19-response>