



Ladner United Church COVID-19 Re-Opening Protocols

The protocols outlined and described below each follow the necessary safety protocols recommended and required by government officials and the United Church of Canada. **This plan will be updated as more information becomes available and as is necessary to ensure the safety of all staff, ministry personnel, and congregation members.** The following policies and documents were used in making this plan:

- The BC Centre for Disease Control’s guidance for “Faith-Based Organizations”ⁱ
- Worksafe BC’s “Faith-Based Organizations: Protocols for Returning to Operation”ⁱⁱ
- Pacific Mountain Regional Council’s “Pandemic Recovery & In-Person Ministry (Re) Launch Guidelines (July 2, 2020)”ⁱⁱⁱ
- The Order of the Provincial Health Officer “Gatherings and Events”^{iv}
- BC Ministry of Health’s “Guidance for Holding Low Risk Worship Services” (June 6, 2021)^v
- “Variance of the *Gatherings and Events* Order of the Provincial Health Officer: To Permit Inside Worship Services – June 6, 2021”^{vi}

This document was written in conjunction with the document “LUC Steps of Re-Opening.” To find protocols specific to each “Step,” please view the corresponding page.

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Protocols for Step 1

There are no in-person gatherings of any kind. The church building is closed to the public, with limited access when necessary. All staff work from home and all meetings, gatherings, and worship services are held online.

The following two policies WorkSafe BC are to be followed as necessary and relevant for all staff working from home:

1. “Working from Home: A Guide to Keeping Workers Healthy and Safe”^{vii}
2. “Working Alone: A Handbook for Small Business”^{viii}

Protocols for Step 2 – as of March 1, 2021

Staff may return to their offices with provision to still work at home or have staggered schedules. One-on-One meetings and pastoral care may resume by appointment, with safety practices and guidelines adhered to.

General

If you are sick, you are not allowed into Ladner United Church. Please use the BC Centre for Disease Control’s “Self-Assessment”^{ix} tool before coming or review the COVID-19 Self Assessment Questions below:

- Are you feeling well today?
- Are you experiencing any difficulty breathing or find yourself coughing?
- Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
- Have you been around anyone who has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19?

If you or anyone in your household is sick (including fever, coughing, sneezing) or if you have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days, BC’s public health authorities require that you stay home.

While at the church, you may be asked to leave if you are showing signs that you are ill.

Entry Procedures

All who enter the church on church business or for church activities are required to be trained in and follow these Entry Procedures:

- Pass the Covid-19 Self-Assessment Questions (see above)
- Please sign in when entering and sign out when leaving the church to maintain contact tracing in case of an outbreak in the church.
- Use hand sanitizer upon entering the building.
- You must practice physical distancing and maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others.
- Wearing a mask is now mandatory while in the building, unless working by yourself in an office space.
- Adhere to all the posted signs and floor decals indicating where to stand (e.g., in front of church office window, behind plexiglass).
- Follow the occupancy limits for each room of the church, while maintaining physical distancing protocols and barriers.
- The kitchen is not to be used except by paid staff with limitations.

Cleaning Protocols

We are following the cleaning and disinfecting protocols from Worksafe BC. See document “COVID-19 Health and Safety: Cleaning and Disinfecting.”^x

The LUC Custodian, as well as other Staff and anyone working in the church, will be trained in these policies and procedures and other deep cleaning procedures. Each will be provided with their own manual, instructions, and cleaning checklist.

There will be a cleaning schedule and checklist provided in each space of the church being used (the Sanctuary, Front Office, Minister’s Office, Advocacy Office, and the Knoblauch Room) as well as instructions for how to use the various cleaning products. In each of these spaces, a spray bottle, and a hand sanitizer will be provided as well. Once an area has been cleaned, Staff must fill out the schedule and checklist.

After a meeting takes place, the staff person is required to sanitize all necessary surfaces after the visitor leaves, according to the “COVID-19 Health and Safety: Cleaning and Disinfecting” document mentioned above. This includes high-surface areas such as doorhandles, light switches, or the plexiglass barrier, if used, or any other surface a visitor may have touched. After the spray disinfectant has been used, please wait 15 minutes before meeting with another person or group.

All staff, upon leaving their workspaces at the end of the day, will need to clean their space and disinfect. The fogger is to be used after larger gatherings.

Staff Office Hours

Ministry personnel and staff members will use their own discretion and collaborate together in naming their hours in the building, according to their mutual comfort with the degree of risk.

Staff members may choose to work at home at times when other staff members are in the office as well or if the building is busy with another gathering. When working from home, all policies from Step 1 are to be followed.

In cases of shared offices, care will be taken to maintain physical distance, especially at doorways. See WorkSafe BC's page "Offices: Protocols for Returning to Operation."^{xi}

When staff members are meeting in-person for planning or supervision purposes, physical distance must be maintained. Masks may be worn to protect participants. Plexiglass dividers will be provided to be used in offices or meeting areas. See WorkSafe BC's page "In-Person Counselling: Protocols for Returning to Operation."^{xii}

The front office during the pandemic is not a communal space. For front office hours with Willow, the church office door will remain locked. Please visit her through the front window located to the right just as you come into the church.

Community Inquiries

The front door of Ladner United Church will remain locked at all times, except when the Sanctuary is open for drop-by visits. Signage will direct inquirers to ring the bell and stand back to wait for staff to respond during office hours. If no staff is present, visitors will be asked to call or email the church office. Staff will remain physically distant when letting people into the building.

Meeting with any staff member or visiting the church for any reason is by appointment only.

Everyone who enters the building will be required to follow all Entry Procedures (see above).

Protocols for Step 3 – as of June 15, 2021

*Small-group church ministry (e.g. a book study) and small group church meetings (e.g. a committee meeting) may begin in the building, adhering to the capacity requirements for each space within the church as well as following safety practices and guidelines. *In addition, we will be beginning in-person midweek worship services, limited to 20 people.*

"Small Groups" are any group who consists of 10 or fewer people. No groups over 10 will be permitted to use the church at this time.

The same policies apply as in Step 2. Any group who meets in the church will follow all policies in Step 2 and be provided with training regarding meeting in small groups (e.g., placing chairs 2 metres apart, no food sharing, no touching or singing, using plexiglass dividers, etc.). The pianos or organ are not to be used without permission.

Small Groups in the Building

To schedule a time to use the building, please contact the Church Office. You will be sent a short questionnaire that will help us to schedule and coordinate a time for you. This may take a few days if confirmation is needed from the COVID-19 Task Group.

Before a church group meets in-person at the church, two people must be designated as the group's "Safety Coordinators." These people must be trained beforehand in how to use the various cleaning products. If you are wanting to meet at the church, please contact the Church Office to set-up a training time and session.

Training in using the Vital Oxide Fogger will be given to LUC Staff, Shelter Staff and volunteers, and other church volunteers as needed. This machine is used to disperse disinfectant in large areas.

Special attention is being given to how groups will be scheduled to minimize any overlap. Each group is given 15 minutes before their start time to set-up in the room (in Knoblauch Room, please keep chairs and tables where they are currently located) and 15 minutes afterwards to clean (using the spray disinfectants, fogger, and re-arranging the room if need be). Please be mindful of the time your group needs to both meet and clean, we will need to have everyone keep to their scheduled time slots to prevent any overlaps from occurring and to allow time for the disinfectant to work properly.

Each group member needs to sign-in at the front entrance for contact tracing.

*AA, Al-Anon, and Overeaters Anonymous are also included in the Step 3 small groups. They can begin meeting the week of June 21, 2021.

Midweek Worship

On Thursday, June 17th, we will begin small, indoor and in-person midweek worship services. These services will be at 3pm and be about a half hour in length. As we prepare for in-person Midweek Worship Services, there are some guidelines and protocols we've set in place to ensure everyone's safety and health:

- The maximum attendance capacity is 20 people
- Pre-registration is mandatory (see below for more information)
- Mask wearing is mandatory

- Maintain two meters of physical distancing from others (no hugging, handshakes, etc.)
- Sanitize hands upon entry and sign-in with the Welcome Host at the front door
- No singing, except for Marcus and a soloist
- Bibles will not be made available in the sanctuary at this time. If you wish you to bring your own you are welcome to do so.
- Please minimize your movement to the Sanctuary, Narthex, and Washroom only.
- The only bathroom open for use at this time is the smaller one located in the Narthex near the front door. This will be a unisex washroom with only one occupant permitted at a time.
- There will be no coffee time or gathering before or after the service

For attending a midweek worship service, please arrive after 2:45pm to check-in and find a seat. Doors will be closed and locked at 3:10 for security reasons.

Pre-registration is required to attend these services. To pre-register, you'll need to call (please don't e-mail) Willow at (604) 946-6254 in the week leading up to the Thursday worship service. Please pre-register before Wednesday at 3pm. We'll need your first and last name, as well as a phone number for contact tracing purposes.

We do want to prioritize, at this time, those who cannot attend Sunday morning Zoom services online. So, if you can attend Zoom worship, we ask that you wait to pre-register each week until Wednesday (so for the first service, wait to call until June 16th). For those who cannot attend Zoom worship, you can call to pre-register on Mondays and Tuesdays (June 14th and 15th for the first week). We want all to attend, we just want to make sure we're giving those who can't worship in other ways a priority to start.

Occupancy Limits

Everyone must adhere to the posted room occupancy limits, especially in the offices and washrooms. Each room and space has the following occupancy limits:

- Front Office = 3 people
- Minister's Office = 3 people
- Library/Advocacy Office = 2 people
- Knoblauch Room = 6 people
- Shelter Room/MP1 = 9 people
- Kitchen = 4 people
- Celebration Centre = 40 people*
- Sanctuary = 40 people*

*For both the Celebration Centre and Sanctuary, maximum occupancy is dependant on the set-up required and how many individual households will be present. The occupancy limit may decrease based on these variables.

Protocols for Step 4 – TBD*

Return of tenant and user groups in compliance with Public Health, WorkSafe BC, and UCC Guidelines.

The same policies will be followed as in Step 2 and Step 3, as applicable.

Tenants and user groups will be trained in all policies of Step 2 and Step 3. Similar to the church’s small groups, each rental group interested in meeting in the building will need to answer a short questionnaire and coordinate with the Church Office.

Training in using the VitalOxide Fogger will be given to two “Safety Coordinators” for each rental group. These people will be responsible for leaving the room(s) they use according to the Sanitization Procedures.

Protocols for Step 5 – TBD

In-person Sunday worship resumes, in compliance with Public Health, WorkSafe BC, and by the recommendation of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

Same policies as for Step 2, Step 3, and Step 4.

The BC Centre for Disease Control policy on gatherings up to 50 people will be followed.^{xiii}

The number of people allowed to attend gatherings will be capped at the room occupancy limits with adequate physical distancing in place.

Attendees will need to pre-register for any gatherings or events to minimize overcrowding.

Religious rituals that involve physical contact between individuals, such as communion, or anointing with oils or baptisms increase the likelihood of disease transmission and will be performed in an alternate fashion that minimizes physical contact, if possible.

Activities such as passing the peace or collecting offerings will not be done. Alternatives that maintain physical distancing will be offered.

Food sharing or services will follow protocols outlined in the WorkSafeBC protocols (e.g., no self-serve systems, adequate hand washing or sanitizing stations, maintaining physical distancing at eating areas, no sharing of condiments or containers).

Monitoring Plan and Assessing Risks

Any concerns or questions about the plan should be brought to the attention of the LUC Covid-19 Task Group (Lydia Ruenzel, Willow Mainprize, Yvonne McKenna, Jane Marynowski, Wendy Bily, and Sandy Holland). Staff, volunteers, and any church attendees can voice concerns to the Front Office who will forward the concerns to the LUC Covid-19 Task Group.

LUC will monitor and assess how these changes are affecting the work of the church and make changes as necessary.

Staff can access WorkSafe BC for more information about any health and safety concerns related to COVID-19.^{xiv}

Any new staff will be trained in these policies and procedures.

ⁱ <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/community-settings/faith-based-organizations>.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/faith-based-organizations>.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://pacificmountain.ca/wordpress2017/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PMRC-UPDATED-July-2020-Reopening-Churches-During-COVID19-Discernment-and-Guidelines-V4.pdf>.

^{iv} <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-gatherings-events.pdf>.

^v <https://pacificmountain.ca/wordpress2021/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19-Guidance-for-Worship-Services-June-6-final.pdf>

^{vi} <https://pacificmountain.ca/wordpress2021/wp-content/uploads/Inside-Worship-Services-Variance-June-6-final-.pdf>

^{vii} <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/working-from-home-guide-keeping-workers-healthy-safe?lang=en>.

^{viii} <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/working-alone>.

^{ix} <https://bc.thrive.health/>.

^x <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-cleaning-disinfecting?lang=en&origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fsearch%23q%3Dcovid%2520cleaning%26sort%3Drelevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet%3D%5BEnglish%5D>.

^{xi} <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/offices>.

^{xii} <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/in-person-counselling>.

^{xiii} <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/event-planning>.

^{xiv} <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates>.