

Questions for MBCM churches to consider

When processing a physical re-opening strategy

In light of Manitoba's change to permitted group size, your church will face the challenging question of "when are we going to physically open?" You have a lot to consider. If the number is 25, who gets to attend? What about at 50, or 250? Will we have outdoor services if the group size permitted outdoors is bigger? The questions and suggestions that follow are intended to assist in those challenging conversations and plans. We don't see these questions or suggestions as exhaustive, but as a sound place to begin your discernment and strategic process.

Please don't hear that we are suggesting that you should physically re-open your church at this time. We invite you to consider these questions as you engage the conversation with your leadership and community.

DISCERNMENT

Discernment questions:

What compelling reason do we have to re-open physically?

When's the right time to physically re-open? What options should we consider? Should we simply open when Manitoba Health opens the group restrictions to a particular number?

What do we need to consider about how our people are feeling and thinking? Staff, volunteers, attendees. Should we consider a survey to our congregation? What questions are most helpful to ask?

What learning doing church differently in the past couple of months needs to be brought into a physical re-opening?

In light of the probability that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue for the short to medium term future, how do we prepare for that part of our future?

When processing physical re-opening, who are the people responsible for that task? Staff? Board? A task force?

What's the wise thing to do?

Here are some questions to process with regard to the logistics and details of a physical re-opening.

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INDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES

Indoor restrictions

What additional burden will this place on our leaders and how do we care for their ongoing health? For example, adding hybrid services, providing additional support for those who cannot attend, etc.

If we opt for a hybrid service (online and physically present) how will you discern who can/cannot attend in person?

How will we adjust to changing restrictions?

Should we consider asking everyone to wear masks while attending indoor services?

What's the wise thing to do?

Congregational Singing

Given that singing is a high risk activity, what changes to congregational singing should be made? *Alberta restricted singing, so this felt relevant.

What does singing behind a mask feel like?

Should we temporarily suspend congregational singing? Why or why not? What about humming?

People who cannot attend

How will we provide engagement for those unable to attend due to underlying health conditions or are otherwise too vulnerable to attend in person?

Parking lot

What additional protocols or care should be given to parking?

Would some additional signage help people experience safety?

Coffee and Refreshments

What changes will you make to serving beverages and refreshments?

Communion

How will you adjust your communion practice? Bring your own elements, etc.

What options for remembrance could accommodate the restrictions in place?

SERVICES CONT. & PROGRAMS

Outdoor Worship Services

How will you provide rest room availability and safety?

How will you monitor physical distancing?

What guidelines and options will you give parents and guardians regarding their children's activities?

Vulnerable Persons

What factors need to be considered with regard to people vulnerable due to age attending services?

Do we consider asking vulnerable people to stay at home? How would we accomplish that in the best way?

Where will you post [signage that informs people](#) with symptoms that they cannot attend?

How will you [inform your people](#) of this restriction ahead of time?

Children's Programming

When we think of families with small children, what needs to be processed?

At what age can children be expected to maintain physical distancing?

If you choose to move ahead with a day camp, how will you design a [day camp that accommodates Manitoba Health guidelines](#)?

Small Groups

Small groups might be a great option for churches in physical re-opening. What practices do your hosts need to follow? What information about the host home needs to be communicated to other attendees?

Custodial

In order to create an environment where people feel safe, what cleaning and disinfecting needs to happen in your building?

Should those cleaning practices be known to all staff, volunteers and attendees? If so, how will you inform your congregation?

When hosting multiple services, what custodial tasks will have to occur between services?

Pews/chairs

If 6 or more feet of distance is required between singles or family groups, how will you arrange your meeting space to accommodate?

Microphone use

If more than one person uses the same microphone inside of the same event/day, what cleaning steps are going to be used to ensure safety?

Signage

In order to facilitate traffic flow that limits physical contact, what signage does your building require?

Restrictions

What areas of your building could or should be restricted?

Will you restrict access to water fountains?

Hygiene

Where will you place or distribute hygiene supplies? Hand sanitizer stations, wipes, etc.

Will you provide masks for those who request? For everyone?