



Notice from Morden Mennonite Church Leadership: May 30, 2020

As of June 1, Manitoba is moving into Phase 2 of its easing of restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is good news! Manitobans have done a good job of following these restrictions, and we can now enjoy greater freedom of movement and social interaction as a result. This greater freedom currently includes **allowance for groups of up to 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors**. Note that **these numbers may increase** over the coming weeks.

It is important to remember, however, that this is still a pandemic. The virus is not contained, and there is not yet a vaccine for it. Thus, Manitobans are still being asked to **maintain physical distance (2m/6ft) from members of other households, to wash or disinfect hands regularly, and to stay home if experiencing symptoms such as fever, persistent cough, or shortness of breath**.

In response to this easing of restrictions, Morden Mennonite Church leadership has determined the following:

The church building remains closed to regular public access. If you need access to the building for a necessary purpose, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

Our in-person Sunday morning worship services are still suspended. We are tentatively planning to start these again in September, along with Sunday school and adult study, if Government of Manitoba regulations and guidelines allow. In lieu of in-person Sunday morning services, we will continue to provide online services at www.mordenmennonitechurch.com under “Blog/Sermons/Services.” Those without internet access can get these on CD—please contact the church office to receive these.

Smaller in-person church gatherings are encouraged, following Government of Manitoba regulations as summarized above. Check in on each other and spend time with each other, even in person, especially outdoors. Care groups are encouraged to meet in person if members feel comfortable doing so. Church committee meetings, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and similar-sized church groups may meet in person if members feel comfortable doing so. If small group members are not comfortable meeting in person, or if an in-person meeting is not desirable for any reason, we encourage you to find alternative ways to connect such as by phone, email, or Zoom.

For these small in-person church gatherings, **outdoor meetings are preferable** to indoor meetings. If a larger indoor space is needed, **the church building can be used for one such meeting at a time**. The main foyer can accommodate 12-15 people appropriately distanced. The church sanctuary can accommodate up to 25 people appropriately distanced (more than this if future Government of Manitoba regulations allow). Contact the church office to schedule such a meeting for a small church group.

Note that the church library is accessible during office hours, one person at a time. Come to the front door and Robyn will let you in. Wash/disinfect your hands both before and after using the library. Wear a mask if you have one. **Note also that other uses of the church building may be permitted on a case by case basis.** Please contact Lisa B. or Michael P. if you wish to inquire about a specific use.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our church and participation in our church community. Let us continue to worship God in faith, to persevere in hope, and to serve one another in love!

These decisions are being made collaboratively by Lisa B. (Church Council Chair) and Michael P. (Lead Pastor), in consultation with Church Council and the Church Ministries Committee (including Associate Pastors). They are monitoring Manitoba Health guidelines on a regular basis, consulting with other local church leaders and church leaders at other Mennonite Church Manitoba churches, and paying attention to how other local groups are responding to this pandemic.

****Contact Health Links at 1-888-315-9257 if you have flu-like symptoms.****

****Check out www.gov.mb.ca/covid19 for updates from Manitoba Health.****

****Check out www.mordenmennonitechurch.com for updates from the church.****

Dear Morden Mennonite Church family,

Grace and peace to you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian virtues have become popular over the past few weeks, have you noticed? Elected officials call for patience. Health officers point us toward kindness. Even self-control gets invoked (remember toilet paper shortages?). These are no longer distinctly Christian virtues. They have become necessary qualities for a civil society in the midst of a pandemic.

Patience, kindness, and self-control are among the “fruit of the Spirit” which the Apostle Paul speaks of in Galatians 5. These are the character qualities of Jesus which show themselves in our lives when we sow the seeds of God’s Spirit in our hearts and minds.

That’s how this works. It’s like the garden some of us are tending in our yards this time of year. We carefully, painstakingly sow seeds like “God is love” and “trust in God” and “love your neighbour” into the ready soil of our thoughts and habits. We plant the stories of Jesus’ life and teachings and self-giving love into the tilled earth of our souls. And over time God’s Spirit shapes us into the image of Jesus. We gradually take on Jesus’ love, his joy, his peace, his patience, his kindness, his generosity, his faithfulness, his gentleness, and his self-control.

More than ever, as followers of Jesus, as the body of Christ, we need these things. The world needs these things. We all need the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control of Jesus—we need the fruit of God’s Spirit—not just in a pandemic, but especially in a pandemic.

May we continue to walk together on this journey with Jesus, whatever may come, in faith (not fear) and hope (not despair) and love (especially for our most vulnerable neighbours)—with a good measure of patience, kindness, and self-control along the way!

Pastor Michael
May 30, 2020

Let's walk in **faith** (not fear)
and **hope** (not despair)
and **love** (especially for our
most vulnerable neighbours)!



Morden Mennonite Church