



Notice from Morden Mennonite Church Leadership: June 15, 2020

As Manitoba looks at moving into Phase 3 of its easing of restrictions in the coming days, we as a church will continue with the guidelines communicated from church leadership on May 30, 2020.

Conversations among us as Church Council, Church Ministries Committee, and Pastors have focused around the criteria we might use for determining when re-gathering for worship in person should happen.

Here are three criteria that have been discussed (note that these are the same whether these services are indoor or outdoor):

- 1) the ability to ensure the safety of all who gather for these worship services in person**, which means full compliance with all provincial health regulations; this means, practically, we must be able to ensure these regulations can be followed (e.g. providing dedicated entrances/exits and washrooms, ushering to designated seats and out from the worship space after, washing all hands before and after, monitoring contact among people for physical distancing and length of time);
- 2) the ability for all who wish to attend these in-person worship services to attend**, which means that gathering size restrictions must be high enough to accommodate our whole congregation; and
- 3) the ability for us to worship in person in a way that fits with who we are as a church and our Anabaptist convictions**, including the importance of communal singing in our worship and our concern for the most vulnerable among us.

In view of these criteria, we continue to look to September as a tentative start-up for our in-person Sunday morning worship services.

However, other guidelines given in the May 30 note from church leadership also remain the same. This means **we encourage informal church gatherings such as care groups (or even multiple care groups together), as long as appropriate measures are taken**: outdoors preferable to indoors, 2m/6ft distance maintained between members of different households (except for brief exchanges), washing hands well and regularly, and staying home if showing symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, and trouble breathing. These informal church gatherings are just as much “church” as our Sunday worship services!

Let’s gather safely in these ways as a church over the summer, remaining patient for the time when we can safely gather for Sunday morning worship in person. May we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, committing ourselves to Jesus’ way of faith in God and hope in God’s good future and love for our neighbour, especially the most vulnerable among us and around us.

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.****