

Dear Ascension Members,

Sunday worship services will begin again inside Church of the Ascension on Sept. 13. Services will continue to be recorded for YouTube and Facebook for those unable to return to church. Plans for programs and ministries will be considered once we have the church service up and running smoothly.

We have received extensive instructions from the Diocese of Huron on how to conduct a worship service safely in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic. As with all else during the pandemic, you can expect some changes to the way church services are conducted. Please read through the following to understand **your responsibilities** to keep everyone safe.

Above all, please do not come to church if you are sick, have returned to Canada in the past 14 days, or have any symptoms of COVID-19, including fever/chills, difficulty breathing, cough, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain, loss of taste or smell, headache, and muscle aches.

To start, we will have **only one service on Sundays, at 10 a.m.**, due to the time-consuming cleaning requirements between services.

Register to Attend

According to the guidelines from the diocese, there will be a limit of 50 people at each service at Ascension. **You must register with the office, starting each Tuesday at 9 a.m.**, either by email (office@ascensionlondon.com) or phone (519-451-7780). There may be a waiting list of people who want to attend, so if you find later in the week that you are unable to attend on Sunday, please inform the office so that someone can take your place. If there is a consistent overflow of people wishing to come to worship, the Executive Team will consider adding another service. Your contact information will be kept on file for contact tracing in case someone who was at a worship service develops COVID-19 symptoms later.

Masks

Everyone over the age of 2 (two) must wear a face mask -- unless they have a medical condition that prevents them from putting on a mask. If you forget yours, there is a small number of spares available at church.

Entering and Exiting

When you enter and exit through the main doors, keep to your right. Once inside, go directly to the Sanctuary doors. (Line up six feet apart if necessary.) Please do not mingle in the Gathering Space.

Hangers have been removed from the coat rack to prevent close contact there. Keep your coat with you during the service.

Seating

Wait for the usher to direct you to a seat. There will be six feet of space between each individual, family or social circle and the next.

Offering Plate

Offering plates will be inside the Sanctuary doors near the back pew. The plates will not be passed around during the service.

Singing

Congregational singing is suspended. However, our music director Alex Baerg (and perhaps a small group arranged by him) will sing.

Children

Children age 5 and under must remain with their parents/guardians during worship. Parents/guardians may bring snacks, drinks, and an activity for their children, but please do not share them with other children.

Children age 6 and up may go to Sunday School. There are two versions of Sunday School: in-person and by Zoom.

For in-person Sunday School, be sure to bring outdoor clothing. The lessons will be held outdoors as long as the weather permits, even in a sprinkling of rain. Masks will not be required outdoors as long as the children abide by physical distancing. If Sunday School is held indoors, masks will be required for all ages, even those in primary grades, and physically distancing will be enforced.

If a child is going to attend via Zoom, parents/guardians should inform Deidre (paul.nd@hotmail.com or 519-453-9780) or Linda (lbraley@rogers.com or 519-659-6782) by each Friday before, so they can receive the Zoom meeting invitation.

Communion

The Peace can be exchanged with words, bows, waves, peace signs, but not with hugs or handshakes. Communion will be by bread only.

The ushers will indicate when you may come forward for Communion. Please remain in your seat until they direct you to come forward. Maintain a distance of six feet from those around you who are not in your social circle.

Clean your hands with the hand sanitizer provided as you go up for Communion.

Receive the bread and immediately step to the designated area six feet to the side. Remove your mask and consume the bread. Put your mask back on immediately. Follow the usher's direction to return to your pew.

You may want to review this video from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Toronto to see this form of Communion in action: <https://bit.ly/2YvhJVg>. (Some instructions in this video are out of date or not the same as in our Diocese, but the pattern for Communion is the same.)

Blessings will be available during Communion, but without physical touching.

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour remains suspended.

Whew, that's a lot! And yet at this point in the pandemic, perhaps little of this is a surprise. We are all making sacrifices during the pandemic to keep our loved ones, our neighbours, and ourselves safe. And none of us would want our church to be the source of an outbreak that brings heartache and loss to our community. Above all, despite the changes, the worship service will remain a sacred experience.

Your Executive Team

Rev. Canon June Hough, Churchwardens Russ Braley and Mary Grant, Deputy Churchwardens Sandra Coulson and Steve Holmes, Treasurer Bill McKinstry