



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Parish Update #12 - Sept. 1, 2020

Dear Fellow St. John's Members,

I hope you all have had a good and relaxing summer, soaking up the sun and the warm days! The adjective I've heard most to describe people's summer and vacation experience this year was "different". And it surely was. The approaching fall will be different as well.

You are receiving this update to bring you up to speed on our plans for re-opening of physical worship and some activities at St. John's. Let me say up front that this is a **limited** and **experimental** opening. Much will depend on the progress of Covid-19 infections as schools reopen and the fall moves forward. We realize that some are anxious to return to physical worship but that others are still uncomfortable with being in groups. The return to physical worship does not mean that you must or should be present. Please do what is best for you.

We are planning a limited return to worship this month. There will be one service of worship each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. (Cleaning requirements after each use of the building preclude holding two services.) You are invited to **register your name** with the parish office if you wish to attend. You can do this by calling the office and leaving your name (and the number of people in your party) with Angela or on the office answering machine or you can email the office at stjohnstruro@ns.sympatico.ca. This registration begins immediately and will run until Sept. 15. Please note: it is your responsibility to register if you want to attend and registration is the only way to come to church for the foreseeable future. All names registered will be placed in a pool and numbered. We will use a random number generator to choose the names of those who can attend for each week. Our maximum attendees for now will rest at 30 to ensure proper social distancing and safety. You will be emailed or phoned during the week that you will be eligible to attend church to let you know. If you are unable to attend, please tell us when you are contacted. We will place your name back in the pool and will offer your place to the next person in the random number sequence. No substitutions will be allowed so if you can't attend, please do not send your family member or friend. Our greeters will have a list of those eligible to attend on a given Sunday and only those eligible will be admitted. **Please do not come to church if it is not your week to attend.** We would not be happy to have to turn you away! We believe that this is the fairest way to proceed for the near future. It is our hope that we can accommodate everyone who wants to worship in 3-4 weeks and maybe less, depending on how many of our folks are ready and comfortable to come to church. When we have accommodated everyone, we will start the rotation again.

Our online worship will continue as it has been. When it is not your week to come to church, you can continue to be with us in this way. For the first rotation of weeks, the worship in

church will be exactly the same as the online worship – a simple service of Morning Prayer with a homily and instrumental music. We will see how we do with our safety measures and then decide when a return to services of Holy Eucharist might be possible.

When it is your turn to come to church, things will look different and we want you to be prepared. Following is a list of the guidelines for our time in church. They have been put in place to ensure your safety and that of your fellow parishioners.

- Come early to church to facilitate seating
- Gather outside in good weather (or in the hall if it's inclement) and wait to be seated
- Maintain social distance (6 feet in all directions) and wear your mask at all times in the building
- Greeters will seat folks according to a seating plan – no choosing of seats
- Seating will be front to back
- Hand sanitizer / masks are available at the back of church. Please sanitize when you enter.
- You are encouraged to enter and exit quickly, without socializing before or after worship
- Greeters will help folks to leave the church from back to front
- Offering plate will be at the back of the church, not passed
- Music will be instrumental only, unless singers are pre-recorded
- The Peace will be shared verbally or with gestures. No physical contact.
- We will use projection only – no books or leaflets
- No sharing of food (coffee time, potlucks)

As to other aspects of our life together, we offer the following. **Masks** are required in all public areas of our buildings: the church, hallways, and our large meeting spaces. For the foreseeable future, **Sunday School** will continue to post Godly Play stories online as physical distancing would be difficult to achieve in their small space. **Physical meetings** may resume if they are small in number. The parlour meeting space can only accommodate 4 people socially distanced. If your meeting is larger than this, you will need to book the upper hall and set it up so that all attendees are six feet apart. There is always the option to continue meeting online.

Office: Angela will return to working in the office in the week of Sept. 8. She will be in the office Monday-Thursday from 8:45-2:00. The office will not be open to the public at this time. If you wish to come in and conduct business with Angela, please call ahead so that she can let you in. As always, we will watch for you and let you in if you have an appointment or are there for a meeting.

These are strange guidelines and rules for a church but these are strange times. We appreciate your co-operation. Your support and participation through the months of lock-down has been astounding! The parish leadership is very aware of the faithfulness of our people and very thankful for it.

As we go forward into this uncertain time, let me share a prayer that our student Jane sent to me soon after masks were made mandatory in Nova Scotia. It was written by the moderator of the United Church of Canada.

A Prayer as I Put on My Mask

Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth –
let it be “an outward sign
of an inward grace” –
a tangible and visible way of living
love for my neighbours
as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered
uncover my heart
that people will see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice will be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
as the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully
and full of care
to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be
shield and banner
and each breath that it holds
be filled with your love.

In your name and in the name of love, I pray.
May it be so. May it be so. Amen