



ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY THE GRACE OF GOD: ROOTED IN THE PAST, ALIVE FOR TODAY, GROWING FOR TOMORROW

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September 2, 2020

Dear friends of St. Andrew's,

Greetings in the name of the Lord! After months of careful planning, the Session of St. Andrew's is pleased to let you know that we plan to reopen the Church for a weekly worship service beginning on Sunday, September 27th at 10 AM. After such a long time of being apart and worshipping virtually, we're looking forward to this opportunity to provide an in-person worship service in the sanctuary.

We'd like to thank the many people who completed the "Return to Church" survey. We've used the survey to determine the approximate number of people who feel comfortable returning to church in September. At the moment, we plan to hold one service every Sunday at 10 AM. We'll re-evaluate this decision regularly as more people indicate an interest in returning to worship in the coming weeks and months.

We realize that there will be some people in our fellowship for whom it may not be advisable to attend worship in person. As a top priority, we'd like to encourage everyone to assess their own health and particular circumstances in making this individual decision.

To extend our outreach as much as possible, we'll also live-stream the worship service on our website each Sunday morning at 10 AM, as well as posting it to the website and Facebook page on Sunday afternoon. Either way, you can watch the service live from home or watch a recorded version of the service later at your convenience. We will also continue to provide the opportunity to phone in on Monday mornings at 10 am in order for you to hear the Sunday service. We would urge you to come back to worship in person only if you are comfortable doing so. On a weekly basis, we would also ask that you come to worship in person only if you are feeling well.

We're grateful to the many people who have stepped forward to volunteer to assist in making coming to worship a safe and meaningful experience. (If you have volunteered to help out, someone will get in touch with you shortly in order to let you know about training.)

Please be assured that we'll be following all of the Toronto Public Health Guidelines for "Reopening Places of Worship." At the moment, one of these guidelines requires that we limit the seating in the sanctuary to 30% of its capacity. This means that we can accommodate approximately 65 people for worship each Sunday. We have made provision for physical distancing in the sanctuary by blocking off rows and having clear signage in place as to where to sit. In addition, ushers and other volunteers will be present in order to usher you into the sanctuary.

What other things do you need to know? In order to prepare for all those who wish to worship in person, attendance will be by reservation only. We ask you to call or email the office every week by Thursday at noon to reserve a spot(s) for the upcoming service. Seating will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, we'll ask you to:

- pre-screen on Sunday morning by answering some health questions, (on-line before coming to worship or in person when you arrive)
- bring your own mask to worship and wear it at all times while in the church building
- maintain physical distancing with those not in your family bubble

We recommend that you arrive at the church 20 to 30 minutes before the service begins each week and follow the directions of the volunteers as you enter the Christian Education Hall through the south doors (beside the kitchen). There will be people to assist you and answer your questions at each step in the process.

In the sanctuary, you will be ushered to your seat...please bring your coats, umbrellas, bags and hats with you into the sanctuary. At the end of the service, please wait for the directions of the ushers when leaving the sanctuary. We will leave the sanctuary either through the sanctuary door to the outside, or the north door which leads out to St. Andrew's Road.

Families with children will be seated together in the sanctuary as there will be no kid's church or nursery care for the time being.

Although most of us love to sing, singing is thought to be one of the principle ways that the COVID-19 virus spreads in group settings. With this in mind, the praise team and members of the choir are busy preparing music with Helen which will be pre-recorded and projected on the screen during the service. Unfortunately, we will have to remind you not to sing along to the hymns and praise songs! We all will look forward to the day when we will be able to sing together in church!

Fellowship after the service will be "from a distance" as we won't be serving food and coffee/tea. During September and the warmer days in October, we'll ask people to move directly from the sanctuary to the outdoors in order to fellowship with one another "at a distance" outside.

Despite all of the precautions that we must take to worship God together safely, we are delighted to be able to be back together as a fellowship and to worship together! We look forward to being able to see some of you in person soon. Be assured that as the COVID-19 situation changes, we will adjust our protocols to reflect the changes.

Please continue to keep the elders and ministers and worship team leaders in your prayers. Please feel free to contact your elder or one of your ministers if you have any questions or concerns.

In Christ,

Pastor Duncan Cameron and Pastor Monica McClure