



Parish of St. Mark – Ocean Park Anglican Church

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December 2, 2021

RE: New Public Health Orders concerning places of worship

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. - James 1:2-4

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ!

Siblings in Christ, I write to you because there are new restrictions in place concerning places of worship because of the new variant of COVID-19. Two choices emerged from Dr. Bonnie Henry's announcement and the Bishops Pastoral letter which can read by following this link: <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/bishops-pastoral-letter-regarding-nov-30-phos-orders>. Through careful prayer and discernment, and in consultation and support of our wardens, trustees, and the recommendations and policies given to us by the Rt. Rev. John Stephens, we have a plan that will be implemented effectively immediately:

1. We will be requiring anyone attending our liturgies (worship services) to show proof of vaccination (double vaccinated). Greeters will not be scanning passports, rather, they will need to see your proof of double vaccination (via smartphone or printed card). Those requesting exceptions for those who are unvaccinated will need to speak to the rector directly and they will need to provide a copy of a letter from their medical doctor for vaccination exemption.

2. In consultation with Bishop John, children twelve and under are exempt. This is because the roll out for vaccinations for this demographic has just begun.
3. Masks are mandatory during the service, events and for any pastoral care. The exception to this rule is for those consuming food and drink, leading readings, prayers of the people and the presider.
4. Choir members are required to wear masks and will be distanced appropriately. The exemption being a soloist who is spaced appropriately may sing without a mask. In order to facilitate proper spacing, I will be working on rearranging the chancel space to make this effective and safe.
5. We are to physically distance ourselves from those outside our families or cohort as best possible. This goes for any church services and events.
6. There continues to be communion in consecrated bread only and the priest will continue to receive the consecrated wine on behalf of the congregation.
7. There will be a collection plate placed at the back of the church for those wishing to submit their offerings this way (there will be no passing of collection plate at this time). Another option is to use the "Donation Station".
8. There will be no drop ins to the office permitted at this time. Appointments are required to see Sheila or Br. Billy. The office doors will be locked to ensure this. Passports will need to be presented upon arrival. The reason for this is that the office tends to be a place where many individuals congregate which increases risk. Thus, your compliance to follow this provision is greatly appreciated.
9. Church groups will need to also use the passport system when congregating at the church.
10. We continue to offer services online as a means of continued worship. Zoom and/or scheduled phone calls are available for one-on-one meetings with Br. Billy for those uncomfortable meeting in person.

Additionally, I would also like to highlight from the bishop's pastoral letter some further policies that we are working to adopt in our church:

Policy regarding lay employees of parishes and those in parish ministries

- All parishes are strongly advised to formulate a parish policy that meets the standard noted above. This means that the priest-in-charge, church wardens, and trustees immediately put in place a requirement that all lay employees of the parish be fully vaccinated (i.e., two vaccinations). Parishes will have until December 31, 2021, to comply.
- Lay administrators of the eucharist are licensed by the bishop, and therefore they must be fully vaccinated (i.e., two vaccinations) by December 31, 2021, in order to continue this ministry. Parishes are required to gather and to keep on file information necessary to show compliance for this requirement.
- Again, requests for exemption or extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Archdeacon Fenton and Chancellor Cadman, with any appeal of their decision going to the bishop.

Policy regarding access to church premises in the Diocese of New Westminster

- For user groups or those who rent space in the parish's buildings, they must follow provincial protocols related to their group. Once again, parish leadership does not have to enforce the protocols but ensure that the group knows they must follow the protocols and have signed a waiver to this effect.
- Regarding other visitors to the church buildings: tradespeople, delivery personnel, building inspectors etc., they must remain masked while inside the buildings. If their stay is protracted, i.e., longer than an hour and they are in shared spaces they will need to show a vaccine passport to the parish representative on site.

Policy regarding coffee hour and social times in the parish

- For a coffee hour (or a meal) that immediately follows a worship service, the same policy that is in effect for worship will be in effect: either the fully vaccinated congregation or the reduced capacity congregation may attend coffee hour. People should be distanced as much as possible and must keep their masks on as much as possible.
- For other social activities (anything other than worship and coffee hour) proof of vaccination will need to be shown. Please plan for this immediately but you must comply for all social activities by December 31, 2021.
- In terms of events, if there is food served, a vaccine passport will need to be shown, but if there are simply items for sale at a garage sale or bazaar (but no consumption of food or drink) a vaccine passport does not need to be shown.

I know that these restrictions can be quite frustrating. However, I don't think these new measures come as a great shock. The good news is that we are in a much different position

than last year. We have vaccines available; we have passports to use; we continue to stream online; and we will have Christmas together. We kindly thank you for your support as we continue to care for each other in the best way possible.

Pax et Bonum!



The Rev. Billy Isenor, OSF+