



Parish of St. Mark – Ocean Park Anglican Church

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Reopening plan for St. Mark's Ocean Park as per Public Health Order and the Rt. Rev. Stephen's Pastoral letter.

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Friends this week we have been informed by the Rt. Rev. John Stephen's in his pastoral letter (which can be accessed here <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/bishops-pastoral-letter-on-re-opening-july-5-2021>)

that we have been given the green light to return to in-person worship with minimal restrictions in place.

Although some of us might be eager to return to "a normal" service and for others more hesitant to return to a normal way of being church, it is important for you to know that it is okay to feel either way and to make the best decision for you and loved ones during these times. With that said, Bishop John's letter states that it is up to each parish to be sensitive to the pastoral situation in how we will gather as a faithful communion in Christ. In my opinion, we must remember that even if you have received both vaccines, the vaccine doesn't make you immune from being a carrier nor spreading COVID-19 to others. So we would offer a return to in-person services with the following considerations and recommendations:

1. *We strongly encourage continued mask use.* The rationale for this is simply about loving our neighbour and ensuring that we are not just protecting ourselves but each other. Some people are not fully vaccinated yet and are awaiting to do so. Although it may seem like an inconvenience, it is one of the best and simplest practices that has gone a great way to protect each other during this pandemic. In addition, it will help to ease the idea of closing the social distance gap with each other that we have become accustomed to.
2. Pre-Registration is no longer necessary.
3. Greeters and welcomers should wear masks.
4. Readers, prayers of the people and cantor (lead singer) are allowed to remove their mask to perform their ministry.
5. Before Eucharist people will be encouraged to sanitize their hands. This is both for the protection of those receiving communion, myself and for my family.

6. Congregational singing is permitted. We strongly encourage you to do this with a mask on.
7. There is no longer a requirement for contact tracing.
8. Washrooms are available.
9. Regarding social time, we will consider doing this in September in stages (more information will be released when the time draws near). The rationale for this is that it will be a big task to reorganize the church to pre covid order. Also it will give those who have worked tirelessly to ensure your care and safety during this pandemic some much deserved rest.

As prescribed by the Rt. Rev. John Stephens:

1. During the liturgy there is to be no shaking hands with the exception with the same household. At the sign of peace, nodding and bowing are allowed and encouraged.
2. Communion will be administered in one kind (Bread only with exception made for the priest).
3. Offertory plate will not be passed around.

A few notes for those who are uncomfortable to attend and for those unable to attend in person worship services.

1. We will continue to offer online services for those who are uncomfortable to attend, and for shut-ins (this will be a permanent ministry of the church).
2. July 11, this Sunday, we will open up with most of these new relaxed regulations, but this service will be morning prayer.
3. Beginning July 14 a midweek Eucharist service will be offered weekly for those who are unable or uncomfortable attending the main service. It will be at 10 am (outdoor chapel weather permitting, otherwise indoor weather not permitting).
4. Beginning July 18 Eucharistic Service offered.
5. Beginning July 25 we will run both services 8am (BCP Holy Communion) and 10 am (BAS Holy Communion).
6. Beginning in September the opportunity for Sunday School to recommence and possible social time afterwards. The latter will be done in stages to ease us into a smooth transition of in person social gatherings.
7. For those who want a socially distanced in person pastoral visit or meeting via zoom or phone call, I am available in any desired format for your comfort. I will visit by appointment only.

Additionally, as the presider of the liturgies, I will continue to wear a mask prior and post service and I will avoid shaking hands (just like the sign of peace), elbow bumps are permissible. Lastly, I empathize how this unexpected news has created a lot of feelings and concerns and, yet, I feel that this plan has created enough space for everyone to continue to feel welcome and safe at our church because of the various formats available to be church. I appreciate everyone's support and continued safety and care for each other out of the love of God. Please continue to pray for all who have had their lives impacted by COVID-19.

In Christ's peace,

The Rev. Billy Isenor, OSF+

