Dear Church Family,

We are now in Phase 5 of the NS Covid Reopening Plan.

As of our Board meeting last night (Oct 4th), we have decided to take a *gradual approach* to reopening that follows *all* guidelines. We are concerned about moving too quickly given outbreaks in other provinces. When considering the make up of our congregation, our desire to love people like Christ, and the fear that still resides in hearts and minds, below is what moving forward will look like. We will reassess monthly.

Public Health Guidelines

Public Health Policy has identified the following guidelines *for us* in Phase 5. Please note that you can go to <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-plan/phase-five/> for all the specifics.

-No gathering size limit.

-No social distancing requirement.

-Masks are required for all events and meetings with the exception of eating/drinking, the Minister or Leader speaking, those leading in singing, children under 2 (possibly up to 4), and a medical condition.

**-Proof of Vaccination (Important):**

 Worship services are not subject to the requirement of showing proof of vaccine.

 Proof of vaccine is required for activities that happen outside of the weekly worship gathering; however, if the group is consistent, you only need to ask for this proof-of-vaccine once.

 Indoor and outdoor weddings and funerals must have attendees show proof of vaccine.

 Proof of vaccination isn't required for paid staff. However, proof of vaccination is required for volunteers who host, lead or organize events and activities.

You will notice that while you do not need proof of vaccination for Sunday morning worship, **it will be required for you to attend any other activity during the week at the church**. Dr. Strang clarified weekly church activities in the following email exchange to our CBAC main office:

[Found at – https://baptist-atlantic.ca/news/helping-churches-navigate-vaccine-requirements-in-new-brunswick-and-nova-scotia/]

**In an email to faith leaders on October 1st, NS Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Strang shared the following:**

**Q:** What gatherings fall under “faith services”, which is the term used in the list of places that will not require proof of vaccine (POV) for attendees? What about the sub-groups of our congregations that would meet on a regular basis mid week, including youth groups, bible studies, etc.?

**A:** Any activities held by a faith organization other than a regular faith service (such as daily/weekly service) is subject to the proof of vaccine policy.  If it is a regular group with the same people then proof of vaccination can be obtained once and does not need to be done each time the group meets.  Any meetings, including organizational business meetings involving people who are not employed by the organization [i.e. workplace meetings are not included] is subject to proof of vaccination policy for in-person attendance.

WBC’s Gradual Approach

Based on the Public Health Guidelines, here is the new normal for us at WBC:

-Signing up for church is no longer required. If you are feeling well, simply come and worship.

-No one will be checking off your name when you enter on Sunday mornings. For the time being ushers will be available to help with seating or answer any questions.

-While social distancing is not required, we ask that you keep at least one seat between you and another family/bubble. You may feel comfortable sitting beside someone, but they may not. In the spirit of hospitality, let’s be sensitive to other people’s need for space.

-Every second row will still be unavailable for the time being.

-The plexiglass will eventually come down.

-Anyone hosting, leading, or organizing an event or ministry will be required to be vaccinated.

-Proof of vaccination will be required to attend all other events in the church outside of Sunday morning worship. This includes meetings, youth group, prayer gathering, small groups, etc.

-Please sanitize hands when entering and exiting the facility.

-Food at functions is still being discouraged, with the exception of children or youth ministry.f

We hope this brings some clarity to our ever-evolving situation. Thank you for your patience. God is good. Any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact the church office.

In Christ,

Pastor Rob

(On behalf of the Leadership Board)