



GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH

25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4



Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

--Matthew 9: 37-38

Grace and peace to you, the scattered saints of George St. United Church. The time to gather draws near.

Some of our sibling churches have already begun to have in person worship. They worked hard over the summer to implement a plan. We also have a plan. We need your help to carry it out.

First, and foremost we are looking for roughly 12 volunteers to populate three (3), four (4)-person teams. These teams will be trained to understand the new protocols we need to have in place for in person worship to happen. We are asking these 12 volunteers to submit their names to Melissa in the Office, Erika Winsor or myself (Reverend John) no later than September 11, 2020. That will give us time to train for a return to the Sanctuary for worship on October 4, 2020. Without these volunteers, the Modified Mission Team feels that the task of meeting all the requirements to keep you safe for in-person worship carries too great of a risk.

Secondly, most everything about the worship service will need to change. There can be no preworship mingling our passing of the peace practice will need to be seriously changed, and there will be no after-worship fellowship. We can gather to worship while keeping our distance from one another. It will not be the same. But it is better than what we have now.

Because we are limited to no more than 100 persons in the building for worship, we are torn between worship by RSVP-only or first-come first-served options. If you have any thoughts about these choices, then we would like to hear from you. An option of two services per Sunday is being explored, but this option it will be heavily contingent on what our musicians are prepared to offer and our ability to clean the Church building between services.

For now, you will need to forget about your "regular" pew. In order to effectively social distance, those present will be directed to their seats for that Sunday's service. You will need to wear a mask until you are seated, and then you can take it off. If you stay seated, you can leave the mask off. If you get to your feet—for any reason—it goes back on again.



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There will be no congregational singing until further notice. Depending upon our compliance with our plan we might have soloists or even a duet to sing for us. The choir will not be singing live until we are given the all-clear by Public Health.

Entrance and exit to the worship space will be by George Street only; or, for those with mobility issues, Buchanan Street.

I will be exploring the depth of our Christian liturgical history to try and recover meaningful forms from previous eras that can replace what we must temporarily give up for the good of all. Because of the need for normalcy, we will likely not be experimenting with too much too soon, as times will continue to test us for a while yet.

On behalf of the Modified Mission Team, I want to thank those in advance who volunteer to take on increased leadership to meet our Public Health requirements. We will do everything in our power to make the return to in-person worship as easy as we can. We ask your patience and understanding in knowing that the requirements are properly onerous. The last thing we want is for worship at George Street to become a factor in a new cluster of cases or, God forbid, the death of one of our saints. Returning to in-person worship will be difficult and slightly uncomfortable. It doesn't need to be deadly.

In many ways, this is what Jesus points to in the text framing this pastoral letter. There is much work to be done and we will need many hands to complete it. Your hands might make all the difference for the congregation gathering again. Please, pray about this need; and, if the Spirit leads you to respond, we would be so grateful for your help.

May the grace of God our Saviour and His Son Jesus together with the Holy Spirit bless you as you consider this request.

Your servant in Christ Jesus.

Reverend John Maich