

Highlights from the Teletown Hall Meeting with Premier Jason Kenny and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Deena Hinshaw on May 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM

- Spiritual health offered in faith community is just as important as other aspects of health.
- Alberta unique, no other province in Canada has allowed places of worship to have a higher limit on assemblies than other forms of mass gathering.
- Relaunch would be much slower in areas of Calgary and Brooks due to the continued increase in cases.
- Regulations around children's ministry could be made similar to the regulations for Daycare centers in the future phases. The context and situations at daycare would be very different than that of children's ministry in a church.
- The risk factor of age is not a binary (say under 65 one is safe/over is risky) — the risk of severe outcomes gets higher as a person gets older — there is a spectrum of risk. There needs to be clarification around wording around age reflecting the individual versus collective risks.
 - *Individual risk*: the risk here is a severe outcome for a particular individual, because of the choice they make. For example: if, participating in a congregational worship is significantly important for the person and they wish to take the risk in spite of the suggestions and the guidelines provided and if the church is able to provide safety measures according to guidelines then the consequences of the outcome would affect specifically that individual person.
 - *Collective risk*: singing in a congregational setting is considered to be a collective risk as this action puts a larger populace at risk.
- Congregations may consider asking members to wear a mask. For members who participate as volunteers such as greeters, ushers, musicians, etc. where safe distancing measures are difficult to practice; mask could be provided for protection of others and not themselves. **If a person assumes to be sick it is more important for that person to stay home for the duration of their illness.**
- It is important to recognize the reason for the limitation of gathering of 50 people or 1/3 of the usual gathering whichever is less. This is to restrict the anticipation of social times outside of the intended gathering.
- Religious organizations are advised to keep a log of attendees which would be destroyed after 2 weeks. Restaurants / retail places gather information from patrons through credit card receipts. This practice would assist with contact tracing if need. Make it voluntary to collect people's names on a list: make it clear that it's only to be used in the event of an exposure and only needs to be kept for two weeks (and then discarded). — it's not being used for monitoring purposes by the gov't. The list will always be "owned" by the church. Gov't is not asking churches to bar entry to folks who don't want to leave their names, but simply want to use it to make contact tracing easier
- The chief medical officer and Premier Kenny will consider all aspects and suggestions for safe for worship during stage to the welcome suggestions to be forwarded to them for research and discernment. So that they could make a well-informed decision for stage two of the relaunch.
- Transparency in communicating the risk factors and the what the available option and suggestions are for people is key. Effective communication is more realistic than a waiver.
- If the worshipping group is smaller than 15 people, for all of them to worship with safe distancing and all other healthcare guidelines are followed. However, keeping in mind the need to restrict any increase in cases, protective measures need to be in place.
- When screening and all safety guidelines are followed, length and duration of a worship service is not relevant as long as the social distancing is kept.

- If there is a charitable meal program, to follow the designated food safety guidelines. However, to recognize that significant spread of the virus has happened due to communal practices and social gatherings act as super spreaders. Premier. Kenny highlighted that Religious gatherings are significant super spreaders and hence the caution.
- The guidelines regarding the size of gathering would be reassessed for the following stages. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the leaders resources in order to protect their communities. It was suggested that the provided guidelines were in place to act as best advice so that leadership could apply it to their individual contexts to protect and support their people.
- Singing restrictions were imposed based on the risk of transmission, in order to reduce the risk. Singing is an activity that spreads the virus wider. whenever possible we need to mitigate risk to people (touching others, shared communal objects). No evidence to suggest that it would completely reduce the risk — would depend on the type of mask. They will investigate and give recommendations.
- The research on specific safe distance while singing is yet unclear. However, it would be allowable for 2 – 3 vocalists to be singing provided that they practice physical distancing and or provided other safety measures such as a flexi-glass between them and facing away from the community.
- The prescribed number of gathering for Worship is 50 or 1/3 of the usual gathering. Would this apply to Youth group, Bible study and other such programs?
This depends on the nature of the gathering. If the venue of the gathering will be in the sanctuary / worship space, it should be treated as such. Depending on the nature of the activity and with adherence to the health safety guidelines, it might be considered likewise. The intention of the guidelines provided are to benefit and not to restrict.
- Children are less likely to be infected by the virus and if so with milder symptoms. However, need for prior health concerns need to be taken into consideration. There are no restrictions for children at this time, except that they should be with their parents at all times.
- It is recommended that sanitization stations be made available at the entrance of the facility along with a few more throughout the facility. It is important to note the safety concerns of these sanitizing stations possibly accessible to children and the dangers associated with it. Kindly take the necessary precautions when installing sanitizing stations to be kept out of reach of young children.
- Directions for Holy Communion:
 - Use of individual cups is permissible. No use of Common Cup
 - Those distributing the elements must ensure that they are not ill; and to strictly abide by the safety guidelines to avoid possible cross-contamination.
- Provided the numbers continue in the present trajectory, with the relaunch strategies assessed through the summer and early fall, we might be in a better position for further relaxation of the number of people to allow for larger gatherings.
- We hope that our stringent implementation of safe hygiene through our heightened wisdom, especially through the season of Rhinovirus and Influenza affecting the season of fall, might affect the way we deal with other illnesses, helping in the process.
- It is still advisable to plan for any gathering with safe distancing and other public safety measures for the next 6 months. We expect the Second wave to be in the fall.
- All outdoor gatherings may have up to a maximum of 50 people following safe distance and all prescribed public safety measures.
- Stage 2 is currently scheduled for June 19, 2020
- Each individual faith community needs to have a conversation about what kind of individual risks are tolerable for that community.