



St Paul's Church

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October 1, 2021

RE: St. Paul's Church - COVID-19 Policy

The September 22nd SafeR Church Committee meeting reviewed St. Paul's approach to COVID-19.

Members acknowledged that St. Paul's must be guided by the Nova Scotia Public Health COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination directive (COVID Directive) and the Diocesan Protocols in Response to Covid-19; *Loving God, Loving Neighbour as Self*. (Diocesan Policy)

The COVID Provincial Public Health Directive spells out where Proof of Vaccination is required and where it is not. That policy starts on October 4, 2021.

Faith Services

Faith services are very specifically designed to include normal worship and not special events. Under the COVID Provincial Public Health Directive "faith services" are exempt from requiring proof of vaccination. SafeR Church notes that this exemption covers Sunday and other services. St. Paul's will NOT require proof of vaccination for those attending our church services. All people attending services must still sign in. The Diocesan Policy requires all to wear masks and will maintain this requirement even if public health moves to remove it. Masking covers everyone, including officiants, readers, choir members and all others participating in the service.

St. Paul's will continue to observe social distancing requirements.

SafeR Church strongly recommends that parishioners eligible for vaccination (anyone 12 years of age or over) be vaccinated. [Note: Anyone interested in vaccination but unable to get the vaccine yet should contact the Church office. St. Paul's will try to assist you in getting vaccinated.]

Other Church Related Activities

Not all activities at St. Paul's are faith services. For those activities that are not faith services, the Diocesan policy and SafeR Church note that under the COVID Provincial Public Health Directive participants must have proof of full vaccination.

SafeR Church is not the policy making or enforcement committee for all church activities. SafeR Church relies on parish leaders who have a clearer understanding of their committee/group roles to consider the COVID Provincial Public Health Directive. If there are clarification questions, please reach out to SafeR Church who will assist wherever possible.

Examples:

Women's Bible Study – This group meets in person with up to 10 fully vaccinated participants. Other people, vaccinated or not, can participate via Zoom.

Coffee after Sunday Service - After church coffee does not meet the exemption standards and will require attendees to provide documentation of their vaccination status. SafeR Church acknowledges the difficulty in openly welcoming all to a faith service and then subsequently only permitting those who have been vaccinated to attend coffee. We ask that Parish Council determine whether or not 'after church coffee' should continue, and if so, to develop a process by which vaccination status should be collected, applied, and managed.

Old Burying Ground Foundation Board - For this group to meet in the back of the Nave, all participants must be fully vaccinated, masked and socially distanced.

Hybrid Matins - This is a faith service and does not require people in physical attendance, masked and distanced, to provide proof of vaccination.

Rector's Lunch - Under the food bank exemption, participants do not have to show proof of vaccination but must be distanced and masked (except when eating).

Youth group - Since this does not qualify as a faith service, leaders must check the vaccination status of all participants for any indoor activities.

These examples should provide sufficient illustrations for other church groups to follow. If there are questions, please call the Church Office for clarification.

Next Steps

The COVID 19 situation continues to change. SafeR Church will monitor developments from public health and the Diocese and make alterations to this policy as they are appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Hartling', with a large circular flourish at the beginning.

Patrick Hartling, Sr. Warden
On behalf of the Executive and SafeR Church Committee