

Dear Friends,

It has now been 24 weeks since we last had a Worship Service in our St. Francis Sanctuary! That's almost 6 months. Thankfully, we have come to a fork in the road when we are now able to Worship once again in our beloved Church. Starting Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup> at both 8:30 am and 10 am we will be allowed to Worship in our St. Francis Sanctuary. I say fork in the road because I do not expect everyone to return all at once. Some of you will decide to stay at home anyway and continue to experience Worship on Facebook or by watching the Service on video through the emails that are sent. When we return things are going to look a little bit different! In a nutshell, the criteria and protocols for gathering in our building are listed below.

1. All people must wear a mask at all times when inside the building and our Sanctuary.  
*\*Please let the church know in advance if there are reasons you cannot wear a mask.*
2. Hand sanitizing stations are placed all over the building and our Sanctuary for regular use.
3. Washrooms are open but limited to 2 persons at a time.
4. Unfortunately there will be no congregational singing. Soloists are allowed with social distancing. Also the choir will be presenting pre-recorded videos of Hymns.
5. Seating arrangements are based on social distancing. Families will be allowed to sit together and children will stay with their family throughout the service. No separate Sunday School will be offered at this time. Activity packages will be available for children, but please bring your own crayons/pencil crayons.
6. Books will not be available for use during the service. The green BAS and the blue Hymnals will be removed from the pews. Additional minimal text will be added to the paper bulletin for your use. Please take the bulletins home with you for reflection later in the week.
7. Because of social distancing, unfortunately there will be no touching by shaking hands or hugging during the Peace. Physical distancing must be maintained.
8. Offertory plates will be placed strategically for us to place our Offering. Those not coming out to services can continue to drop donations into the locked red mailbox at the door facing the bus loop at any time or mail them to the church or use the Canada Helps online donation as detailed on the website and Facebook pages.
9. Holy Communion will be distributed with the Bread only and via a standing line instead of using the altar rail.
10. Coffee Hour has been suspended indefinitely.
11. At the present moment, entry to the Church will be through the outside door of the Hutchison Room from the paved pathway. All will be asked to review the prescreening questions and to 'sign in' to provide contact-tracing data. The exit will be the same way. Those who are using a wheelchair, walker or cane are able to use the Entry from the Parking Lot.

12 When the Service is over we are expected to leave in an orderly, distanced fashion.

I know that this sounds like a lot but we must do everything we possibly can in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. A fuller, detailed list of Safe Opening Protocols is available for anyone to see. Please speak to one of the Wardens or Father Jeff directly to receive a copy.

There are a few other things to note:

#### Worship Online

The re-opening of the church will NOT mean the end to our electronic communication and worship. The leadership understands not all will be comfortable returning to the church building right away. This will be a personal choice for each one of us. To that end we will continue to publish worship videos on Facebook and forward emails with the bulletins and links to a recorded version of the homily.

Part of our service will be taped live. This means that, starting September 13, Facebook videos will not be posted on Facebook until after lunch (by 2 pm on Sundays) and there will be less email links – we will send only the taped homily and taped hymn. Please note that links to all videos posted to Facebook are available on the church website (go back and view your favourites or ones you have missed <http://stfrancisaofm.org/> )

#### Prayer Requests

We will continue to take prayer requests sent to either [stfrancisnews@yahoo.com](mailto:stfrancisnews@yahoo.com) or to Father Jeff directly. Father Jeff will continue to raise these prayers up to the Lord on your behalf on Wednesday mornings and we will pause in the Sunday intercessions to acknowledge these prayer requests.

It will be good to see everyone again face to face!

We ask for your prayers as we begin worship in our church space. We will be in a period of transition and will be trying different things available within the confines set out by the Diocese. As always our hope is to stay connected, support each other and our community and praise God from whom all blessings flow. Your input/questions will be welcomed.

Otherwise, we would like to say to all that we are thankful that we are well and have weathered the storm so far. We have persevered!

God bless you all.