



# Eagle Ridge United Church COVID-19 Safety, Policies, and Procedures Plan

ERUC ministry personnel, staff, and volunteers must adhere to this safety plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will regularly monitor recommendations from the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), WorkSafeBC, and the Pacific Mountain Regional Council of The United Church of Canada (PMRC) and update the Safety Plan monthly or as the need arises. ERUC's COVID-19 safety plan and protocols will be posted on the church website, at the front entrance of the building, and will be emailed to the leaders of any groups.

If any Ministry Personnel or staff has a safety concern, they are encouraged to discuss it with the Lead Minister or the Ministry & Personnel Committee.

The plan will be adjusted and modified at the beginning of each month, or as needed, and all employees and volunteers working on the church property will be notified by email as this happens.

The ERUC (ERUC) office will be open for staff but closed to visitors unless they have made an appointment.

The following safety plan is designed to ensure a safe working environment for all employees of ERUC. These measures, as outlined in the following document, will ensure the safety of all staff members and the preservation of health for all people who interact with ERUC. This plan has been based upon the guidelines provided by WorkSafe, the BCCDC, and PMRC.

This Safety Plan does not encompass the prospect of worshipping together in-person. From a risk-benefit perspective, worshipping in-person poses more risks than it does benefits. When we are moving back toward to our pre-COVID-19 worship practices, this plan will be amended to reflect that.

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

### Symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses including the flu and the common cold. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough or worsening of chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle aches

While less common, symptoms can also include:

- Stuffy nose
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Dizziness, confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

### **Understanding the risk**

The virus that causes COVID-19 typically spreads in two primary ways:

1. The spread of droplets, and possibly smaller aerosol particles, when a person exhales. The harder the exhalation (coughing, singing, laughing, speaking loudly, sneezing), the more droplets that are projected, and the further they travel.

The risk of person-to person transmission increases the closer you come to other people; the more time you spend near them; and the more people you come near. Physical distancing measures, reduced time together, and small numbers help mitigate this risk.

2. Touching a contaminated surface and then touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth. The risk of surface transmission increases when many people touch the same surface (e.g., a door handle) over a short period of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

### **Guiding principles for decision making**

In creating this Safety Plan, we have adopted the following guiding principles:

1. We assume that no one would consciously expose others to the novel coronavirus.
2. We assume that someone in every group has the virus, but they are not aware of it, being either asymptomatic or not yet symptomatic, but still contagious.
3. We recognize that the members of ERUC are by and large very attached to one another, predisposing them to forget the COVID-19 precautions in favour of close interactions.
4. We recognize that our church building lacks large spaces outside of the sanctuary which could better facilitate safe gatherings.
5. We affirm that the possible lethal consequences associated with COVID-19 are just too serious to not proceed with an abundance of caution.
6. We believe we have viable although less satisfactory options such as on-line and outdoor meetings to meet most of our needs as a community of faith.

### **Options to reduce exposure risk**

Staying at home is the best option to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Staff are encouraged to work from home as much as possible and meet church members either on phone or electronically. If that is not possible or feasible, then we must rely on physical distancing measures and effective cleaning and hygiene practices to reduce the risk.

The following general protocols are meant to mitigate the risks of transmitting or contracting COVID-19 while on the property of ERUC.

## GENERAL PROTOCOLS

### **Who may access the building**

#### **1. Those who may not enter the building**

Anyone in one or more of the following circumstances **may not enter the building**:

- anyone who is unwell and exhibiting even slight COVID-19 symptoms;
- those who have family members at home who are unwell and exhibiting even slight COVID-19 symptoms;
- anyone who has had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 (this means you have been contacted by the health authority's public health team);
- anyone who has been ordered to self-isolate or quarantine;
- and anyone who has travelled to any countries outside of Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days.

We discourage those in any of the high-risk categories, or who live or regularly interact with an individual(s) who is at high risk, from accessing the building. The BCCDC lists older people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease at higher risk of developing more severe illness or complications from COVID-19.

#### **2. Those who may enter the building**

Generally, only staff, and those individuals or groups who have booked appointments may enter the building. We discourage anyone from dropping in. We encourage everyone to meet electronically, which can easily be arranged by phone or video conferencing.

Community members are encouraged to contact staff by phone or email for pick ups, deliveries, or office matters.

### **Entrance to the building**

#### **1. Exterior signage for outside visitors**

Before entering, visitors are directed by signage to stop and review the posted sign(s) to ensure that they qualify for entry into the building.

#### **2. Physical restriction of access to the building**

The outside doors will remain locked at all times. If staff are clearly on site, visitors with keys will not let themselves in, but rather knock and wait for the door to be opened. Physical distancing is required if a line-up forms.

### **Inside the building**

#### **1. Interior signage and postings**

Further signage and postings in the narthex outside the office will include:

- a copy of this Safety Plan;
- a poster regarding hand hygiene;
- signage to inform everyone of the measures in place;
- poster regarding physical distancing;
- poster regarding office procedure;
- and a poster regarding proper mask usage.

Doors to each room shall have a sign indicating the room occupancy limit.

#### **2. Hand hygiene**

Once inside, everyone will either use the hand-sanitizer provided, or proceed directly to a sink and thoroughly wash their hands.

**3. Physical distancing**

Physical distancing (2 metres or 6 feet between each person) will be maintained at all times while on church property, including when entering and exiting, conversing, seated, waiting in line for the washroom, and when gathering outside of the building. Staff are to avoid meetings or gatherings where physical distances cannot be maintained. Consider using larger rooms, moving meetings outside, or having all or some attendees attend virtually.

**4. Masks or face shields**

In times or places where physical distancing is not possible, masks or face shields are required to be worn. Masks and face shields are available at the office if needed.

**5. Contact information**

For the purpose of contact tracing, everyone is required to check in and have their name and contact phone number recorded every day they are in the building. If the Administrator is not present to record that information, sanitized pens and a contact sheet will be provided for individuals to record their own presence.

**6. Physical barriers**

The church office door will remain closed and visitors will not be permitted to enter.

- In order to facilitate communication with the Administrator, the passthrough shutter will be opened and a 2-foot table placed in front so as to ensure physical distancing.
- Photocopying, retrieval of documents, and the like will be performed by the Administrator.

**7. Room usage and occupancy limits**

Visitors will only access the pastors' offices for one-on-one meetings that require absolute privacy. Otherwise, larger rooms will be used. When using small offices, it is recommended that a window and/or door be opened to circulate the air.

The larger the group is, the higher the risk is for COVID-19 to spread. This is why the maximum number of people allowed in the building is 50, plus other staff working on site in other parts of the building in the case of an event such as a funeral or wedding. The following occupancy limits are based on each person being in a separate "bubble." In some cases, the room occupancies could increase slightly if two or three persons are permitted to sit together.

Room	Maximum Occupancy
Main office	2
Pastor's office	2
Loft	5
sanctuary	50
Kitchen	1
Room 1 East	9
Room 1 West	9
Room 2	8
WayPoint office	3
Room 4	5
Room 5	5
Room 6	5

#### **8. Access to office equipment and supplies**

In order to protect the Administrator, access to the photocopier and office supplies is limited when the Administrator is there. In most cases, the Administrator will be able to perform the task for others. For those times when the office is accessed when the Administrator is not present, the person must wash their hands or use hand-sanitizer before entering the office. Before leaving the office, care will be taken to sanitize shared equipment and high touch areas such as the keypad on the photocopier, light switches, and door handles. The office computer may only be used by the Administrator.

#### **9. Use of other communal equipment**

Please use alcohol to sanitize appliances such as the tea kettle, coffee maker, microwave, water cooler, and refrigerator before and after use.

#### **10. Washrooms**

Only the washrooms in the narthex will be open for use in the building. There will be signs for hand washing and sanitizing procedures posted in the washrooms.

#### **11. Food and drink**

Eating and drinking together poses a couple of difficulties. The first is that it presents an opportunity for one person to contaminate something that another person will eat. The second is that consuming food or drink requires that a person not be masked. Both of these difficulties have viable technical solutions, but it is unclear whether people will follow them closely enough in some settings. Properly serving food during a pandemic is difficult, requiring masks, gloves, and the elimination of a buffet.

Our experience also tells us that when we get together in larger groups such as in worship, memorial services, or weddings, there is a strong tendency for people to move in closer than advisable. Masks ameliorate close contact to some extent, but if food and drink are introduced masks have to be lowered and that level of protection is lost. In our estimation, the combination of these two impediments make the likelihood of a safe sharing of food and drink low. Thus, there will be no sharing of food and drink at large gatherings with the possible exception of bottled or canned beverages, and then only if they are consumed while people are physically distanced.

#### **12. One-on-one meetings with Pastors**

- Wherever possible one-on-one meetings will take place online.
- In-person appointments will be schedule and staggered to allow time to sanitize surfaces between appointments.
- If people arrive early, they will be asked to wait in their vehicles, or outside the building if possible until just before their appointment. If that is not possible, they will be asked to wait in the sanctuary until the pastor is ready to meet with them.
- Cleaning and hygiene protocols will be followed prior to the visit and after the visit.
- Care will be taken when exchanging documents.
- Careful consideration of the risks and benefits will be taken when considering making home visits. One may want to consult other staff and leaders in making that decision.

#### **13. Deliveries**

The office will arrange and request contactless delivery where possible. Deliveries will be left on the table provided.

#### 14. Travel

Staff and parishioners are encouraged to ride separately. If ridesharing is needed, masks will be used by all the people in the vehicle.

### CLEANING AND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS

1. The Administrator will clean High touch areas (e.g., door handles, washroom light switches) and common washrooms will be cleaned at the beginning and midway through each workday, and before and after heavy usage such as a wedding or funeral.
2. Dishes and utensils will be washed in the commercial dishwasher/sanitizer and not hand washed. Place dirty dishes in the busing tub to be taken to the kitchen.
3. Cleaning products for high touch areas will be provided throughout the areas of the building that are in use. Each employee is responsible to clean their work areas if others have or may use them.
4. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the office, and staff should use it before touching any surface outside of their work area.
5. As much as possible, communal doors should stay open so as to reduce contact with door handles.
6. Chairs, tables, countertops, door handles, light switches, and any other high touch surfaces in the rooms where any meetings took place must be thoroughly sanitized.
7. Labelled waste baskets will be placed at entrances and exits for the disposal of used tissues.

### WORSHIP, FUNERALS, AND WEDDINGS

#### Worship

Currently we have suspended in-person Sunday worship, opting instead for virtual worship. When we move to reinstating in-person worship, this Safety Plan will be expanded.

#### 1. Singing

At this time, congregational singing is considered too high-risk an activity in which to be engaged. However, it is possible to have a small group of singers lead the on-line worship if they strictly adhere to the following procedures:

- Sing only in the sanctuary, with the air exchange system turned on and the outside doors and windows closed.
- Be at least 4 meters (12 feet) from each other and not facing one another.
- Avoid sharing equipment (mics, music stands); if sharing must occur, clean and disinfect between users.
- Reduce the duration of indoor singing. The longer the duration of a practice where people are in close proximity, the greater the chance of transmission.
- Have practice intervals followed by breaks to allow the room to ventilate.
- Make sure the social aspects are adapted for COVID-19 precautions. Don't share food,

opt out of physical greetings (like hugs or handshakes), and keep adequate physical distance during breaks.

## 2. **Baptism**

Recognizing the importance of the sacrament of baptism for those ready to commit to the kingdom movement, we will make a concerted effort to celebrate baptisms during the on-line worship of the community. In order to protect everyone involved, the following protocol will be observed:

- Prior to baptism liturgy, the font is cleaned and sanitized.
- All items involved in baptism are set up by one gloved person immediately prior to baptism (candles, water, Bible, etc.).
- Fresh water and a fully sanitized font are used for each person who is baptized.
- The Pastor conducting the baptism sanitizes their hands immediately before baptizing and dons a mask.
- Adult candidates will wear a mask.
- At the baptism of an infant or young child, parents will wear masks and have hold of the child throughout the baptism, anointing, and laying on of hands.
- During the baptism, an adult candidate will bend over the font, or parents of a young child/infant will hold the child over the font.
- The Pastor pours water over the head of the adult or child without making physical contact.
- Pastor conducting the baptism sanitizes hands before anointing and immediately following the laying on of hands.
- The members of ERUC who represent the congregation will sanitize their hands before the laying on of hands and presentation of the symbols.
- Everyone involved will sanitize their hands before and after each separate baptism and before and after each anointing and laying on of hands.

## **Funerals/memorial services/celebrations of life**

Funerals, memorial services, or celebrations of life can be held in the sanctuary provided they do not exceed the occupancy limit, and the parties agree to adhere to the Safety Plan. Whether the event is 50 people or 15 people, we require everyone to try to keep two meters between others who are not in their household. We acknowledge that it is easy to forget to distance when surrounded by people you know and love, especially in a situation like a funeral or memorial service, but we must nonetheless require that we keep each other safe. Most people recognize that hugs and comforting hands on a shoulder are temporarily unwise, and that nods and waves are ways that people can greet each other and offer support.

### 1. **The Pastor is responsible for the safety of everyone.**

The presiding Pastor is responsible for the congregation's adherence to the Safety Plan. Thus, if there are any breaches of the protocols, the Pastor will be addressing it with the family of the deceased, directing them in how to solve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, the Pastor must postpone the service until they feel that everyone can remain safe.

### 2. **Occupancy limit and Zoom option**

Currently, the limit on any gathering is 50 persons, including the Pastor and any other staff present in the sanctuary for the service. In order to prevent persons showing up unannounced, it is advised that the location of the service not be publicly announced

beforehand, and that any public communication contain a statement to the effect that the service itself is by invitation only. If the family wishes, the church is equipped to stream the service via Zoom. If the family would like to use another platform, they will need to organize that themselves.

**3. High-risk persons**

As difficult as it may be, we are discouraging from coming to the service those considered high-risk for adverse effects of COVID-19. We hope that viewing the service on-line will help with the loss of not only the loved one, but also missing the service in-person. If a high-risk person deems it too important for them to miss, please advise the Pastor ahead of time so we can take as many precautions as possible to keep them safe.

**4. Communication**

As much as is possible, those attending the service will be informed ahead of time of the safety procedures they must follow. The church will send the family an email which can be forwarded to their guests outlining the safety procedures. At the service, the guests will also receive a brochure containing the same information. Signs will direct the flow of people in and out of the sanctuary, as well as reinforce the protocols.

**5. Pre-planning seating and contact tracing information**

The family will supply the church a list of invited guests including the following information:

- names;
- phone numbers;
- and family “bubbles” (i.e., those living in the same household) so they can be seated together.

**6. Building preparations**

The congregation will have their seating pre-assigned as per their household bubbles so as to maximize the number who may be seated. Volunteer church hosts will assist guests to their assigned seats.

All high touch surfaces will be sanitized in those areas in which the congregation will be present (outside entrance, narthex, and sanctuary) before and after the service. Tissues, hand sanitizer and garbage cans will be placed around the sanctuary as well as in the narthex.

**7. Hosts**

The church will supply at least two hosts to:

- assist the guests in finding their way;
- ensure good hand hygiene;
- hand out masks as needed;
- and escort guests to their assigned seats.

**8. Air exchanger**

To facilitate good air flow, the air exchange system will be turned on with the outside doors and windows closed.

**9. No singing**

At this point, congregational singing is considered a high-risk activity.



## 10. Following the service

Our experience with memorial services during the pandemic unfortunately has confirmed that occasions such as these often lead to the failure to recall the COVID-19 safety guidelines. Since the longer that persons are in contact with each other, the higher the risk is for transmission due to increased duration, frequency, and intensity of interactions between attendees. Given that one of our working assumptions is that someone is contagious without knowing it, it is prudent to restrict the length of time over which larger gatherings exist. Furthermore, the likelihood exists that a memorial service congregation will contain persons of higher risk. As such, we must impose the following restrictions on the time spent at the church following the service:

- Socially distanced greetings may take place in the sanctuary, but the time will be limited to 30 minutes, after which the group must begin the process of packing up to leave.
- We cannot accommodate receptions at the church.
- Drinks may be made available for those who remain behind, provided the drinks are bottled or canned. It is especially important for those having something to drink to remain socially distant as they will not be able to wear their masks.

## Weddings

Currently, the BCCDC is discouraging large weddings, preferring they be restricted to immediate family. We are prepared to welcome wedding services performed in the sanctuary provided the parties agree to adhere to the Safety Plan. The mandated size limit is 50 persons, including the Pastor and required church volunteers. We require everyone to keep their physical distance from others who are not in their household. It is easy to forget to stay 2 meters apart at a time of such a celebration, however since weddings and wedding receptions have led to some super-spreader events, we simply cannot take the risk.

### 1. **The Pastor is responsible for the safety of everyone.**

The presiding Pastor is responsible for the congregation's adherence to the Safety Plan. Thus, if there are any breaches of the protocols, the Pastor will be addressing it with the parties getting married and/or their families, directing them in how to solve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, the Pastor must postpone the service until they feel that everyone can remain safe.

### 2. **Occupancy limit and Zoom option**

Currently, the limit on any gathering is 50 persons, including the Pastor and any other staff present in the sanctuary for the service. In order to prevent persons showing up unannounced, it is advised that the location of the wedding service not be publicly announced beforehand, and that any public communication contain a statement to the effect that the service itself is by invitation only. If the family wishes, the church is equipped to stream the service via Zoom. If the family would like to use another platform, they will need to organize that themselves.

### 3. **High-risk persons**

As difficult as it may be, we are discouraging from coming to the service those considered high-risk for adverse effects of COVID-19. We hope that viewing the wedding on-line will serve as an acceptable alternative to being there in person. If a high-risk person deems it too important for them to miss, please advise the Pastor ahead of time so we can take as many precautions as possible to keep them safe.

### 4. **Communication**

As much as is possible, those attending the service will be informed ahead of time of the

safety procedures they must follow. The church will send the wedding couple an email which can be forwarded to their guests outlining the safety procedures. At the service, the guests will also receive a brochure containing the same information. Signs will direct the flow of people in and out of the sanctuary, as well as reinforce the protocols.

**5. Pre-planning seating and contact tracing information**

The family will supply the church a list of invited guests including the following information:

- names;
- phone numbers;
- and family “bubbles” (i.e., those living in the same household) so they can be seated together.

**6. Building preparations**

The congregation will have their seating pre-assigned as per their household bubbles so as to maximize the number who may be seated. Volunteer church hosts will assist guests to their assigned seats.

All high touch surfaces will be sanitized in those areas in which the congregation will be present (outside entrance, narthex, and sanctuary) before and after the service. Hand sanitizer and garbage cans will be placed around the sanctuary as well as in the narthex.

**7. Hosts**

The church will supply at least two hosts to:

- assist the guests in finding their way;
- ensure good hand hygiene;
- hand out masks as needed;
- and escort guests to their assigned seats.

**8. Air exchanger**

To facilitate good air flow, the air exchange system will be turned on with the outside doors and windows closed.

**9. No singing**

At this point, congregational singing is considered a high-risk activity.

**10. Wedding party requirements during the service**

During the ceremony, the wedding party will not be required to don masks but will do their best to stay at least two meters (six feet) apart from each other. The Pastor/Officiant will wear a mask during the signing of the register and at any other time they cannot maintain social distance.

**11. Following the wedding ceremony**

Our experience with weddings during the pandemic unfortunately has confirmed that occasions such as these often lead to the failure to recall the COVID-19 safety guidelines. Since the longer persons are in contact with each other, the higher the risk for transmission due to increased duration, frequency, and intensity of interactions between attendees. Given that one of our working assumptions is that someone is contagious without knowing it, it is prudent to restrict the length of time over which larger gatherings exist. Furthermore, the likelihood exists that a wedding congregation will contain persons of higher risk. As such, we must impose the following restrictions on the time spent at the church following the wedding

ceremony:

- Wedding pictures may be taken in the sanctuary, but the time will be limited to 30 minutes, after which the group must begin the process of packing up to leave.
- We cannot accommodate wedding receptions at the church.
- Drinks may be made available for those who remain behind for the pictures, provided they are bottled or canned. It is especially important for those having something to drink to remain socially distant as they will not be able to wear their mask.

## ERUC GROUPS

Small groups associated with ERUC may meet in person as long as they can adhere to the Safety Plan. Larger groups need to consider that a socially distanced circle of six people has a diameter of 4.25 meters (14 feet), while a circle of eight people will have a diameter of 6 meters (20 feet), making it difficult to hear one another. An option is to split the group and make two circles. Another possibility is to have some people come in person and have the rest join on Zoom. Participants could take turns coming in person while the others connect on-line.

Meetings which take place outside are presumed to be safer than those taking place inside.

When deciding on whether a group should meet in person, remember that the larger the group and the longer they stay together, the greater the risk of COVID-19 transmission should anyone be contagious (which we should always assume to remain safe).

Each group is required to sanitize the areas or furniture they have used after their meetings.

Groups are reminded that they cannot share food or drink. The consumption of personal food and drink is permitted providing the remnants are responsibly dealt with assuming that they are now contaminated with Coronavirus.

### 1. Youth groups

If a Youth group is approved to meet outside on church property, the following protocol will be followed:

- Participants are required to stay home if they are not well.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at drop off and pick up.
- A list of those in attendance and contact information will be kept in case of need for contact tracing.
- Proper physical distancing will be maintained (2 meters) whether in a circle or space for an activity (e.g., games or other projects).
- Masks will be used if we cannot maintain 2 meters of physical distance. Participants are asked to bring their own mask.
- Please provide your own chair if possible. If not, folding chairs from the building will be available.
- Sharing of supplies will be limited, and any that are shared will be sanitized before another person uses them.
- Only individually packaged food or drinks will be served. Youth may bring their own refreshments if they like.
- Washroom use will only be in an emergency, so participants are asked to plan ahead. If someone requires access to a washroom, only one person at a time will be given access to the building. Hands will be sanitized upon entering the building.

## NON-ERUC GROUPS

Outside service/support groups such as NA or rental groups such as strata meetings, may use the church as long as they follow the Safety Plan found on our website (eruc.ca) and sanitize the areas they have used after their meetings. An ERUC representative will orient a group representative as to their responsibilities regarding the Safety Plan which will have been sent to them in advance.

## IF A CASE OF COVID-19 IS REPORTED AT ERUC

The Lead Pastor will appoint a person to lead the response and identify person(s) responsible for each of the following steps. If the Lead Pastor is not available, the Chair of the Official Board will take their place.

**What to do if you are notified of a positive COVID-19 test by staff, volunteer, participant, tenant in the building or by Fraser Health.**

1. Contact Lead response coordinator: Denise Drummond
2. Send all staff / volunteers on premise home.
3. Assemble documentation – contact tracing lists.
4. Inform Chair of the Official Board.
5. Contact Fraser Health.
6. Identify areas where person was present in building and complete a thorough clean/disinfecting using appropriate safety protocols.
7. Follow advice by Fraser Health Officials regarding contact tracing and public communication.

**\*Reminder** – Personal medical information is confidential – the name of the impacted individual should not be released unless required by Fraser Health or other authority.