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## Reopening Church Buildings

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### WHO DECIDES TO REOPEN?

The decisions concerning what happens in each community of faith must be guided by three requirements:

- 1. What the Province of Ontario allows;**
- 2. What the local health unit has mandated;**
- 3. What the local governing body of each community of faith decides in accordance in addition to the above requirements.**

We are a conciliar church with each Council having specific responsibilities. These decisions rest with the local governing body (council) and cannot be dictated by the regional council. We continue to offer the guidelines initially posted at the start of the pandemic and continue to be updated as more vaccine information becomes available for churches.

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These resources reflect advice that predates the availability of vaccines.

However, many of the recommendations, re contact tracing, cleaning, worship practices and use of the building by community groups and other renters, remain in place. You can find these resources on the COVID-19

Pandemic Resources webpage by clicking the below.

**\*\*NEW Vaccination Information provided by the UCC General Council can be found later in this email and has been added to the COVID-19 Resources webpage.\*\***

Please remember that vaccination protection is not available to all children and is limited for those with immune compromised health. Governing bodies are encouraged to be attentive to the needs of the most vulnerable, especially in matters such as children's programming, baptism and communion.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Resources



### 1) CURRENT LIMITS IN ONTARIO

#### STEP 3:

Face coverings and physical distancing of 2 metres remain in place.

## NEWS

The Skylight Festival has new dates:  
August 28th & 29th



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gatherings, with capacity limited to permit

physical distancing of 2 metres

- Indoor social gatherings and events (i.e. church meetings) up to 25 people
- Outdoor social gatherings and events up to 100 people

## Provincial advice for Religious Services Rites and Ceremonies:

### ADVICE FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES, RITES AND CEREMONIES

## 2) LOCAL HEALTH UNIT

Below are two excellent, up-to-date resources for reopening Places of Worship. Not all units have specific information or updates for religious services, rites and ceremonies.

**We recommend making direct contact with your local health unit for their current guidelines for Places of Worship.**

Toronto Public Health Information for Places of Worship

Grey-Bruce Public Health Information for Places of Worship

## 3) RESOURCES FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY, VACCINATION STATUS

community for a program on Saturday evening and a Sunday morning gathering. Pandemic protocols will need to continue to be practiced during the Festival, inside as well as outside (masks, handwashing, & social distancing). Registration is now open!

**More details & REGISTRATION!**

## INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

For recent statements from the United Church of Canada, information about territory acknowledgement and other resources for building right relations, please visit the Indigenous Justice page on our website.

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We encourage all local governing bodies to review the vaccine information and FAQ for communities of faith. This resource was prepared by the General Council and outlines the potential legal implications of mandated vaccine policies. It can be found on the COVID-19 Pandemic Resources page and homepage of the regional council website. **This document includes:**

[What is the current best practice on mandatory vaccinations?](#)

[Could Communities of Faith impose a mandatory vaccination policy for in-person attendance at church services?](#)

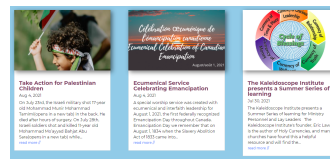
[Can Communities of Faith accommodate individuals who cannot be vaccinated?](#)

[Could Communities of Faith impose a mandatory vaccination policy for their tenants \(i.e. daycare workers\)?](#)

[How can Communities of Faith collect information about vaccination status?](#)

### Vaccination Policies

This document can also be found on the COVID-19 Pandemic Resources webpage.



**For up-to-date news and events, check out our new "Newsroll Blogs" and events section on the website homepage!**

[Visit Website](#)

**The Regional Council is now an Affirming ministry!**



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**COVID-19  
Pandemic  
Resources**

**THANK YOU...**

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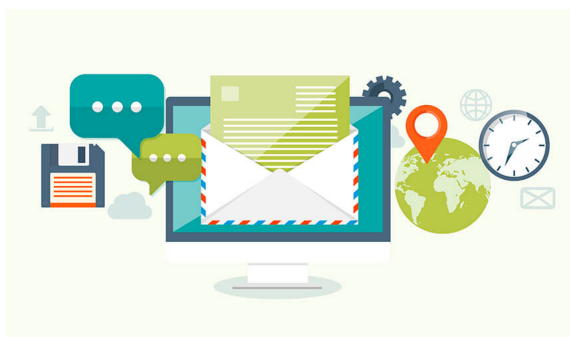
to ever-changing circumstances with the pandemic to ensure the safety of all who access their space and to ministry personnel who have been adapting their skills for use with new tools.

As you anticipate September, the month that feels like the start of the church year, may you enter it with hope, confident you have the information you need to make the best choices available for your local context.



**More details & REGISTRATION!**

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