



Fort Macleod Alliance Church

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Dear Congregation,

I would like to update you on our congregational activities after yesterday's Provincial Covid announcements. As a church, we are still gathering together Sunday mornings for Worship. Our Sanctuary capacity is now 40 with an additional 18 that can participate together through Live Streaming into our Fellowship Hall. Our Discoveryland will continue to operate with 20 in their area. Please note there is no Discoveryland for Dec 27th or Jan 3rd as a break for our Discoveryland leaders. Live Streaming of the Worship Service will continue to take place for those who prefer to gather virtually from home.

Up to this point, there has not been an issue with needing to turn anyone away. Once the Sanctuary reaches the 40 - person capacity, groups will be ushered together into the Fellowship Hall. Another possibility is that particular small groups may "book" the fellowship hall and plan to move together into it if space is needed in the Sanctuary.

One thing we want to avoid is people who wish to gather staying home to make room for others, as the "others" are often thinking the same, and the result is lots of extra room with no one gathering! If we need to, we will move to a registration option for Sunday morning, but with the Fellowship Hall, seating has not been an issue to this point even measured against the new gathering criteria. We will reassess this after next Sunday.

Another option, that the church is willing to explore in increasing our in-person capacity, is the addition of a second service. This service would likely have less music, be without Discoveryland, and not be recorded. It would likely be a smaller and more intimate gathering with the same sermon as the Live Streamed service. Please let the Church Elders know if participation in such a service would be of interest to you as we want to give as many appropriate gathering & worship options as possible when people are feeling greater degrees of isolation.

Please remember that as a public gathering place, those who come into the church building are expected to wear a mask as is part of all indoor public places within the Province. Children Grade 3 & under in Discoveryland will be exempt from masks as in school.

Small Groups and ministry groups are still able to book the Fellowship Hall or Sanctuary for their meetings during the week. Groups are asked to follow the guidelines that have been put in place for such gatherings, including distancing, wearing masks while gathering, and cleaning areas used when finished. We are one of the few places that are still permitted gatherings within the Provincial management of the pandemic and we do not wish for that to change as there are many who are making use of those opportunities. Please follow what is being asked during your use of the building. For further information or to book the Fellowship Hall or Sanctuary, please contact the Church Office for more details.

We realize that there are different opinions and positions regarding how we navigate this season as a church. We thank you for your patience and continued prayers as your Church Leadership tries to make decisions that seek to honour all aspects of God's Word while we faithfully worship God and encourage ongoing Christian community as followers of Jesus. We are open to your comments and input, as you share with us, as they are a potential source for listening for the leading of God's Spirit. Crisis and change are not usually celebrated within their moments, but the Holy Spirit continues to invite us to listen and respond with creativity and courage to not just what He does through us, but how He reveals and shapes within us. How am I / we reflecting Jesus in our lives and interactions with others? My prayer is that our faith and faithfulness would continue to mature and that our love for one another would continue to be strengthened and that when the world looks at our sometimes imperfect witness, they will still be able to "declare that God is really among you." (1 Corinthians 14:25b). It is when our faith, love, and faithfulness are pressed upon and pressured that they have the most opportunity to mature and grow.

On behalf of the Board of Elders,

Pastor Kevin Roberts.

**For more information on Alberta Health Gathering Measures for Faith Communities, see the following link: <https://www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx#toc-2>