

Halifax Chinese Alliance Church
Practical Guidelines for Reopening and In Person Worship
During COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated: September 11, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Halifax Chinese Alliance Church is reopening in person worship services in accordance with Nova Scotia and Canada's health measures.

The world is in a "new normal" and so our worship service and other church events will also be different from the pre-pandemic practices.

We believe in person faith gatherings are an essential part of the Christian community and our witnesses to the society. Yet we must also ensure the safety of the people and the facilities. Together with West End Baptist Church (WEBC), we will ensure the practices of physical distancing, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and other measures to protect everyone in our faith gatherings during the pandemic.

There are posters in the church about the symptoms of COVID-19, what to do if you are experiencing symptoms, maintaining physical distancing, use of masks, and hand washing procedures. There are also Purell stations throughout the church for hand sanitizing.

Everyone, including staff and volunteers who are on duty, should stay home if they are feeling sick.

Please carefully read the practical guidelines and **pay special attention to the red highlights**.

We will continue to adjust the guidelines according to new events and government regulations.

VIRTUAL CHURCH

At this time the church facilities are only open for Sunday worship services. All fellowships and small groups will remain meeting virtually.

We recognize that some members may not feel safe returning to the church facilities and will choose to participate in worshipping God virtually. Everyone should assess their needs and risks of meeting in person. Our worship services can be accessed through HCAC's Facebook site.

IN PERSON GATHERINGS

Nova Scotia mandates that we need to keep a record of all who attend an in person HCAC event or simply enters the church building. This is a precautionary measure to make it possible to track down those who may come in contact with a person who contracts COVID-19. Therefore, screening will occur outside the building and everyone who enters will need to sign in with his/her name and phone number when they enter the building. The lists are only for traceability purposes and will remain confidential.

TYPICAL SUNDAY SERVICE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Below is a list of things you will need to know to attend church “in person”:

GATHERING LIMITS: Nova Scotia limits indoor gathering to 50% of the venue’s capacity and up to 200 people maximum. With these limits, we can accommodate 200 people in the sanctuary and 70 people in the Berdi Delong room.

Prior to the pandemic, our Sunday worship attendance ranged from 50 to 80 people. Therefore we could seat everyone and keep the physical distancing without any difficulty. Nevertheless, seats will be done on a first come first serve basis.

CHINESE AND ENGLISH SERVICES: Other than Communion Sundays and special joint services, we will have separate Chinese and English services every Sunday. The Chinese service (Cantonese and Mandarin) will be held at the sanctuary. The English service will be held at the Berdi Delong room.

We will not all gather together at the sanctuary and divide after the worship music as it was before the pandemic. People attending the Chinese service will go directly to the sanctuary and those who attend the English service will go directly to the Berdi Delong room immediately when they enter the church building. During these times, the music worship part will be projected to the Berdi Delong room until the English service has its own worship team.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE: We ask that you arrive 15 to 20 minutes before the service begins.

1. You will be required to line up outside while observing physical distancing protocol.
2. Before you enter the church building (only through the central main church door on Preston St.), you must put on a non-medical mask. (If you do not have a mask, the church will make every effort to provide you one.) You shall remain masked until you leave the building. People who are unable to wear a mask for health reasons must provide proof upon request and be more vigilant to follow the physical distancing rules. Children under the age of two are exempt from wearing a mask.

3. Someone will ask you screening questions (Are you experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19? Have you been around anyone with COVID-19? Have you recently travelled outside of the Atlantic bubble? etc.) as set by the Nova Scotia Health Authority.
4. You will be required to sign in with your name and provide a contact number (Pens will not be reused for another person until they are sanitized for the next event).
5. You will be asked to sanitize your hands.
6. An usher will seat you and your family, to the Chinese or English service respectively, in a manner that respects the physical distancing protocol. (We ask that you follow the lead of the usher for your seat arrangement and do not change your seat).

USE OF BUILDING: Only the Sanctuary, Balcony, Berdi Delong room, entryway/foyer, and MAIN LEVEL washroom will be open to the congregation. This is to minimize the number of surfaces that need to be cleaned. Kitchen, Parlour, Library, nursery, the second level and the basement are all off limits. No food can be served or consumed in the church.

All pew cushions in the sanctuary have been removed. You may bring your own cushion, but they must be taken out after the service or the cleaners will dispose of items left in the church.

Chairs in the Berdi Delong room once used will be sterilized, dated and stacked separately. New pile of chairs will be used for a new event.

All traffic inside the church is one way. Please follow the markings and see the floor plan in the appendix on movements inside the church.

WASHROOM USE: If you need to use the washroom during the service, for those who are in the sanctuary, you must exit the sanctuary using the front door by the platform and after using the washroom you must walk down the hallway and re-enter the sanctuary from the back. For those who are in the Berdi Delong room, you must exit the room using the door by the kitchen and the hallway and after using the washroom you must walk down the hallway and re-enter the Berdi Delong room from the door by the WEBC office.

In cases of necessity, the washroom on the second floor might be open for the congregation during the Sunday service. However, all traffic to and from the second floor washroom must be in a one way direction, enter from the staircase by the main level washroom and exit from the opposite staircase to the front entrance door before you return to the sanctuary or the Berdi Delong room.

Cleaning supplies are in the washroom. Please clean the light switches, door handles, handrails, taps, paper towel machine, and flush before and after your use.

Throughout the week, only the main floor washroom is open for use.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: There will be no nursery and children programs until a later time. Teens will attend the English service at the Berdi Delong room.

The nursery must be closed. All toys and children supplies of the church are not to be used. Parents please bring quiet toys and activities from home for your children.

Parents must make sure their children stay close to them while they are in the building and the children must sit with their parents and cannot move to other pews. If they need to go to the washroom they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

GREETING PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH: Traditional greetings such as handshakes and hugs should be avoided. Please smile and nod with one another. Please keep your social distance, remain masked and stay with your families. When you are seated you will only be seated with the people you arrive at the church with.

THE PASTOR AND WORSHIP LEADERS WHEN LEADING THE WORSHIP: The Pastor and worship leaders will preach and lead on the stage in the sanctuary (not the floor as in the past to give at least 3 meters from the congregation). The Pastor and worship leader in the English service at the Berdi Delong room will also preach and lead on the stage. The first row of seats will be at least 3 meters from the stage. Thus they will not be wearing a mask when they are preaching or leading, but otherwise, they will be masked.

THE WORSHIP SERVICES: Worship services will be shorter than before the pandemic.

Singing: We will sing fewer songs with a small worship team every week. The worship leaders will keep physical distancing and face the same direction when leading the singing. There will be no choirs during the pandemic. The congregation can sing but everyone must wear masks during the singing.

Offering: There will be no passing of offering plates. A donation box will be placed so people can donate as they enter or leave the building. This box will be disinfected at the end of service and the donations will be counted after a safe period of time to ensure that the contents are not a cause of COVID-19 spread.

We encourage you to donate by e-transfer on a monthly basis. You can send e-transfers to "Halifax Chinese Alliance Church" using halifaxcaonlineb@gmail.com. Please note that this is different from the church's usual email address. halifaxcaonlineb@gmail.com is specifically for online banking purposes. You do not need to set a password, the e-transfer will be automatically accepted and deposited. Then under the note area, please:

(a) write your name (unless your email address specifically identify who you are),

- (b) the word "donation" (as it is not a fee or repayment, so we can prove to CRA it is a donation and issue you a donation receipt at year end),
- (c) the breakdowns, e.g. \$50 General, \$50 Thanksgiving, \$50 Mission, \$50 Building (everything goes to general if there is no breakdown).

If there is not enough space to write everything, after you make the e-transfer, send another email to the same address halifaxcaonlineb@gmail.com to state how you want to distribute the total donations.

You can also donate by sending checks payable to "Halifax Chinese Alliance Church" and send to P.O.Box 22070, RPO Bayers Rd., Halifax, NS B3L 4T7

Please specify on the check or a piece of paper (a) the name of the donor, (b) that this is a donation and (c) what are the breakdowns of the donation if you are not using a donation envelope.

Bibles: Please bring your own bible or use bible apps on your phone. We will try to project the Bible passages on the screens. Church bibles will need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Communion: Typically, Communion is held the first week of the month on joint Chinese and English worship service. During the pandemic we will only provide Communion if we have enough supplies of prepackaged communion cups (prefilled communion cups which contain the juice and communion wafer in a single, sealed, two-part container). This item is currently in back order.

When Communion is provided, it will be on a self-serve basis. For those who would like to partake in communion, please pick up a prepackaged element as you enter the church. Then wait for the time in the service to take communion as instructed. Please take your containers at the end of the service and dispose of them on your way out of the church in the wastebasket.

WHEN SERVICE ENDS: Please wait for instructions at the end of the service. The congregations will be dismissed in an orderly way that maintains physical distancing. You will be asked to exit the building immediately. The exit for those in the sanctuary is on the Preston Street side by Quinpool Road. The exit for those in the Berdi DeLong room is on the Preston Street side by the parking lot. Please take all your belongings and dispose of used tissues in the wastebasket. Please fellowship with one another outside the church or in the lawn besides the parking lot, while still maintaining physical distancing. Please be respectful of others and do not bunch up in the church.

PERIODIC PANDEMIC UPDATES: All items in this plan are subject to change based on the Nova Scotia Health Authority updates, the Church Leadership and feedback from the congregation.

GENERAL ITEMS ABOUT THE CHURCH:

Currently, the church is only open for staff, Sunday worship services, and worship team practices on Thursday night only.

Masks are mandatory for faith gatherings. Everyone needs to wear a medical or non-medical mask as they enter the building and for the duration of the service or meeting.

Attendance must be recorded for tracking purposes. Physical distancing should be followed.

Throughout the week, only the main floor washroom is open for use.

Cleaning of common areas (Photocopier, washrooms, hallways, meeting rooms etc.) will occur on a regular schedule. Cleaning supplies will be available in high traffic areas like the photocopier and washrooms.

All hard surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected between services and periodically throughout the week. The church will be clean and disinfected on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the end of the day and before the Church service starts. Pews, handrails/door handles, light switches, microphones, etc. will be clean and disinfected between services.

A commercially available peroxide-based cleaner, Vert2GO Saber, which is approved for use as a disinfectant against COVID-19 is used for cleaning. It is proved by Wood Wyant Janitor supply and you can find the detail at <http://www.sanimarc.com>.

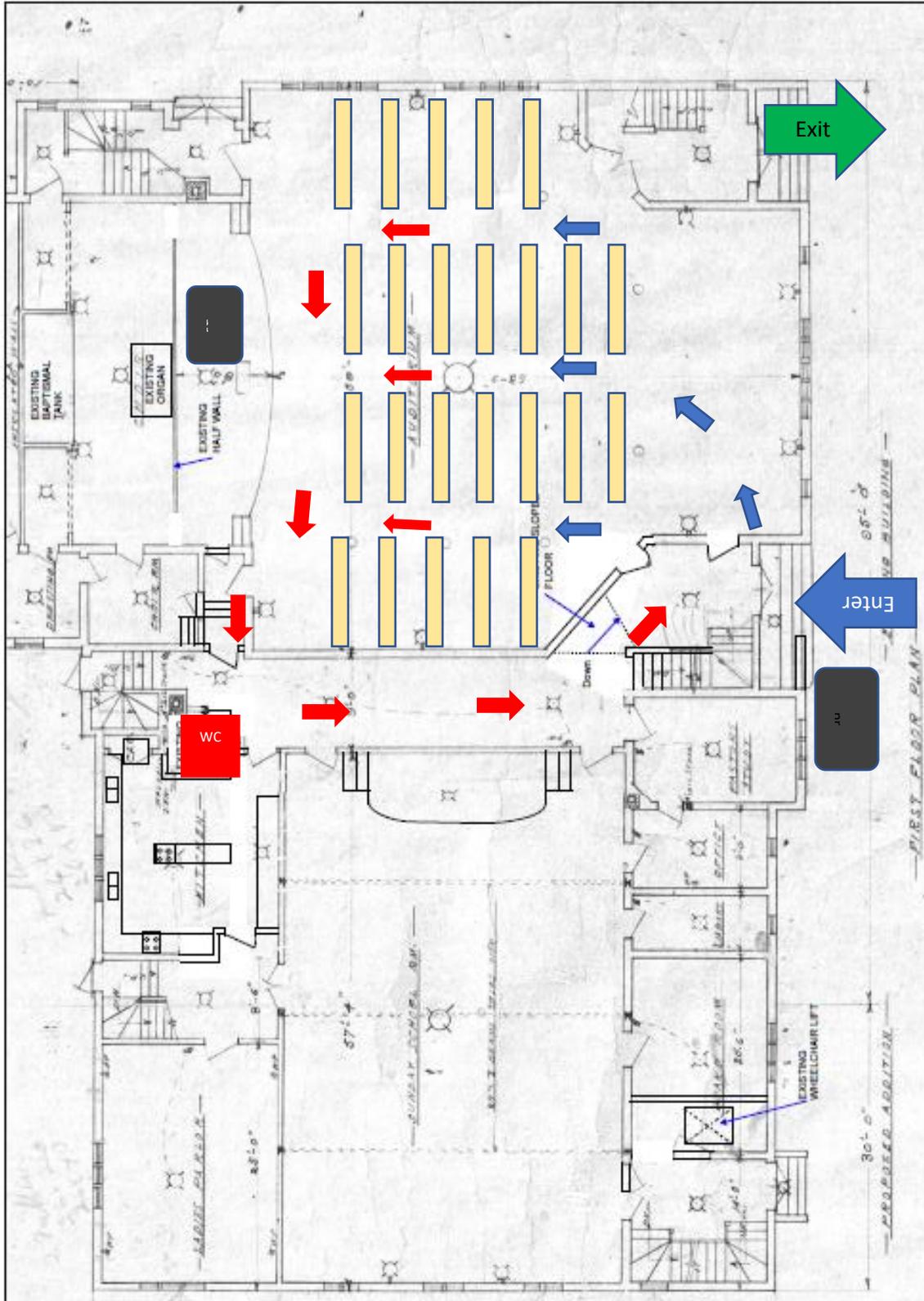
It is our desire to make sure we do everything we can to ensure those who attend HCAC on Sunday stay healthy. **Please do not feel pressure to attend if you are at high risk, medically speaking, or uncomfortable with being around groups of people at this time.** We do ask that all who attend would be respectful of the physical distancing protocol out of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you for your understanding in all of this.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have any additional questions regarding the opening please contact Pastor Nelson or any of the elders.

Appendix Floor Plan:

QUINPOOL ROAD



PRESTON STREET

Duffus Romans Kundzins Rounsefell ARCHITECTS LIMITED

January 2020