



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Ontario Conference

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**Pastors, Head Elders, Clerks, Communication Leaders
Ontario Conference**

UPDATED CHURCH GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19

Dear Pastors, Head Elders, Clerks and Communication Leaders:

After prayerful and careful reflection and consideration of the health, safety, and wellness of our church families, the Ontario Conference administration is issuing the following updated guidelines.

Gatherings

As per instructions from the Provincial Chief Medical Officer, all gatherings, including churches, continue to be suspended until further notice, and our buildings are closed to the public. We will continually keep you updated.

Live Streaming/Pre-recordings

While we encourage churches to explore alternate ways of delivering their church worship services, such as Zoom, we have not yet officially suspended live streaming or pre-recordings from the church building. If you are continuing to live stream and/or pre-record please:

- Ensure that there are no more than five (5) persons in the building at any one time.
- Ensure that everyone in the building adheres to required physical distancing and remains two meters (six feet) apart at all times.
- Ensure that there is no sharing of microphones and that microphones are disinfected after each use.
- Provide hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and a receptacle for disposal at the podium. Encourage participants to sanitize their hands and wipe down the top of the podium before use.
- Participants should be screened by asking the following questions:
 - Do you have any of the following symptoms: fever/feverish, sore throat, runny nose, new or existing cough, difficulty breathing (e.g., struggling for each breath, speaking in single words), chest pain, confusion, extreme drowsiness or loss of consciousness?
 - Have you travelled internationally within the last 14 days (outside Canada)?
 - Have you travelled nationally within the last 14 days (within Canada)?
 - Have you had close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case?
 - Have you had close contact with a person with an acute respiratory illness who has been outside Canada in the last 14 days?
 - Do you work in the field of health care?
 - Do you live with anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms?

If a respondent answers yes to any of the above questions, we strongly advise that person be asked to stay home and not participate in the live stream or pre-recording for the church building.

- If rotating participants, please ensure that the other group does not enter the parking lot or building until the first group has left the site.

- If broadcasting pre-recorded services from before the government restrictions, please include a lower 3rd indicating previously recorded and the date it was originally recorded.

Food Banks

Food banks have been deemed to be an essential service. As such, their operation can continue. While there is an allowance for up to 10 persons functioning at any one time at a food bank, Ontario Conference is strongly recommending we keep it to no more than five persons. If operating a food bank, please keep the following in mind:

- Recipients of the food bank are not permitted to enter the building.
- Volunteers should be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes, and it should be ensured that they are being used.
- Physical distancing must be observed at all times.
- Continue to check with your local governing body for updated guidelines pertaining to the operation of food banks.

Online Giving

- Continue to promote online giving.
- Churches that do not have an Adventist Online Giving account are strongly encouraged to set up the account so that members can worship God in giving even if they cannot be physically present.
- Arrangements for the pickup of tithes and offerings could be made with members. Those picking up tithes and offerings should be provided with gloves, sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes. They must also adhere to the physical distancing requirement and remain two meters (six feet) away from the person wishing to return their tithes and offers.

Communication

Each church must continue to be communicating with its members intentionally, via telephone, WhatsApp, Facebook, group email, etc. Please do not forget your shut-ins.

Church Renting to Other Groups

Since our churches will be closed for worship, a notice should be sent as soon as possible, and a prorating of rent considered whenever possible. The Property and Risk Management director will provide a letter.

Miscellaneous

For more information, please refer to the Ontario Conference website.

Mansfield Edwards
President

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