

## Update from the GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team, Oct 29, 2021.

Dear brothers and sisters:

Thank you to following all public health guidelines to control Covid-19. The Ontario government has implemented Stage 3 Reopening effective Oct. 25. Since our church has chosen to opt in for proof of vaccination, many of the restrictions for us have been lifted including capacity limits and the need for 2m physical distancing. In the interest of added safety, we will follow a stepwise approach with stricter requirements.

The main changes are (in red in the guidelines):

1. The capacity of sanctuary A, B and large gym will increase to that which allows a physical distance of 1m.
2. A group of song leaders will be allowed to lead singing. The one behind the Plexiglas can take off his/her mask while behind the Plexiglas. The others must maintain 2m distance and wear masks at all times.
3. Congregational singing will be allowed. Everyone must wear a mask. Everyone must bring extra masks so that if a mask becomes wet or soiled, it can be changed immediately. Everyone is asked to put on his mask properly with good fit on the skin so that there is no leakage where the mask touches the skin.

We will continue to monitor the course of the pandemic in the GTA closely. If infection rates start going up, we may halt the re-opening plan or go backwards in the re-opening stages.

We will be monitoring the gradual reopening to evaluate whether it is a fruitful use of our limited resources.

We are hopeful that the Covid vaccines will be approved for >5 year olds by **Nov.** and for >6 month olds by **Feb.** With this timeline, everyone should have the opportunity to get fully vaccinated by **June, 2022.** **When the vaccine is approved for children, we will give a grace period for them to get vaccinated before requiring proof of vaccination.**

The guidelines below have been revised from the last version that was effective Oct 6, 2021 and will be the defining version effective **immediately.**

Peace and grace,  
GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team

## **GCGCNY Covid-19 guidance. Updated Oct 29, 2021**

- I. Our General Guiding Principles**
- II. Requirements for coming to the church during any stage**
- III. Church Re-opening Stages**
- IV. Specific guidance for each stage**

### **I. Our General Guiding Principles**

1. We will balance government recommendations with an extra margin of safety and caution and the principles and practices of our Christian Faith and our church.
2. We will consider all health and occupational safety concerns.
3. We will work within the law and government guidelines since these so far have not had areas of conflict with our beliefs.
4. We recognize that our congregations are interconnected as a community of families which has members attending different congregations.
5. The pastoral team will have input before we finalize any guidelines.
6. We will take a proactive approach. We will anticipate future developments rather than only react to present and past developments.
7. We will be monitoring the course of the pandemic in GTA closely. If infection rates start going up, we may halt the re-opening plan or go backwards in the re-opening stages.
8. The Covid-19 Crisis Response Team welcomes everyone's feedback, comments, suggestions and questions. We strive to reflect our values of love, faith, hope, unity, truth and transparency in this process and in our decisions and implementation. Our contact is: [admin@gcgcny.org](mailto:admin@gcgcny.org) (416) 499-0111 x 101.
9. Each lead pastor may decide to implement each stage at a later date than this guidance's earliest dates in accordance with the needs and resources in each congregation.

### **II. Requirements for coming to the church during any stage**

To ensure the safety and health of everyone and to follow government guidelines, whenever anyone comes to the church, we require that:

1. They are not ill (no fever, no chills, no cough, no shortness of breath, no decrease or loss of taste or smell. If <18, no vomiting, nausea or diarrhea. If >18, no marked tiredness or sore muscles or joints.) They have not been told to self-isolate or live with someone who has been told to self-isolate. They should self-check their temperature before leaving their home.
2. They have not been in contact with anyone with confirmed or suspected Covid-19 in the last 14 days.
3. They need to show proof that they are at least 2 weeks post their second Covid vaccination. If not, they need to show BOTH a government approved medical exemption certificate AND proof of a negative Covid test within the last 48 hours. Each congregation will try to have someone trained and ready to do the 15 minute Rapid Antigen test at least 15 minutes before

the start of the worship service at the entrance. The availability of this testing will depend on available resources.

4. Children under 12 years old will not require a Rapid Antigen Test to come to in person church meetings. Since no vaccines are approved for them yet, they do not need a government approved medical exemption certificate.
5. They maintain physical distancing of at least **1 meter**.
6. They follow frequent meticulous hand washing and hand sanitization.
7. They wear a face covering.
8. They disinfect all equipment after use. e.g. Microphones, musical instruments, music stands etc. Disposable microphone covers will be provided. Disinfectant spray and paper towel will be provided.
9. Whenever possible, items should not be shared to minimize spread of pathogens through touch. E.g. sheet music, books etc.
10. No food or drink are allowed in the gyms and sanctuaries A and B except for a personal container of water. (no coffee, tea or other beverages that cause a mess when spilled.)
11. For worship servers on stage, only one is allowed to lead without a mask or face covering behind the Plexiglas barrier. **More than one is allowed if they are from the same social bubble**. The Plexiglas must be disinfected between use by different worship servers unless the servers are from the same social bubble.
12. The maximum number in a group in a room is the number that permits physical distancing of **1 meter**.
13. Each person must supply and wear their own face covering. **Extra ones should be brought so that if the face covering becomes wet from singing, it is changed immediately. Everyone is asked to put on his face covering properly with good fit on the skin so that there is no leakage where the face covering touches the skin.**
14. **Congregational/group singing will be allowed.**
15. They must use only the designated entrances and exits. They must walk only in the direction of the arrows.
16. Church attendees must not enter into the Grace Nursery School area since they have re-opened and have to follow strict infection control protocol from the government.
17. Each attendee will be provided with a pair of gloves and a disposable disinfectant wet wipe OR one sheet of paper towel to disinfect any surface he/she has touches after the end of each meeting. Spray bottles with disinfectant will be available to spray on the paper towel. The surfaces will be dampened with the paper towel or wipe and allowed to air dry. After discarding the gloves and paper towel or wipe, he/she must use hand sanitizer to disinfect his/her hands. A person may bring his/her own disinfectant wipe if he/she wishes.
18. Only designated washrooms will be opened. There is a limit on the number of persons allowed in the washroom at each time.
19. A person using the toilet is to pick up a disposal toilet seat cover before entering the washroom. The cover is to be flushed down the toilet after use. Everyone after washroom use must wash his/her hands with soap and water and dry with a paper towel. The same paper towel must be used to open the washroom door before being discarded in the waste bin outside of each washroom.
20. Room use must be prebooked with Queenie at [admin@gcgcnyc.org](mailto:admin@gcgcnyc.org) (416) 499-0111 x 101 at least 1 week in advance. Information needed for booking are the person responsible and his/her contact info, the number of attendees expected and the time slot required. In booking

the room, the person booking the room agrees to bear the responsibility that all government and church guidelines are followed by his/her group. He/she must have the names and contact information of each person attending and be able to produce this information if requested. He/she must turn on the air purifiers (if available) in the room before the meeting and turn them off after the meeting.

21. All children grade 6 and under must stay with their parents unless attending program arranged by KLS Children Ministry.
22. Families or social bubbles can sit together.

### **III. Church Re-opening Stages:**

1. Live streaming at church **NOW**
2. Adult Worship (virtual and in person) **NOW**
3. Prayer meeting (virtual and in person) **NOW**
4. Cell groups- meeting at church or at home (virtual and in person) **NOW**
5. Sunday School (virtual and in person)
6. Children activities. (to social distance, keep face covering on, maintain meticulous hand hygiene **as per Children Ministry Covid guidelines**) **at discretion of Children's Pastor**
7. use of the gyms for sports, sharing food & drinks
8. New normal church function (virtual and/or in person subject to ministry needs)

At present, for our church, we are open for stage 1-4 of the above with the lead pastors making the decisions for each congregation.

Further re-opening of new stages will be based on the above General Guiding Principles and be subject to available human, organizational, financial, supply and equipment and technological resources.

### **IV. Specific guidance for each stage**

#### **Stage 2 – in-person worship service:**

1. Everyone is to sit on designated seats only.
2. Pre-registration will be required. Allocation based on “first come first served” basis and equalizing opportunity for all.

#### **Stage 4 – in-person cell groups:**

**Reopen starting immediately.** Cells are encouraged to meet at home where no masking or physical distancing is required if everyone is fully vaccinated against Covid.

Please note that the City of Toronto specific guidance for the reopening of churches

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-reopening-recovery-rebuild/covid-19-reopening-guidelines-for-businesses-organizations/covid-19-guidance-faith-based-organizations/>

is out of date and has not been updated. So we are following the provincial guidelines for meeting and event spaces with opt in proof of vaccination that came into effect on Oct 25.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200364>

Your continued prayers would be appreciated.

Psalm 91: 1-6 (NIV)

- <sup>1</sup>Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.<sup>[a]</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”
- <sup>3</sup>Surely he will save you  
from the fowler’s snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.
- <sup>4</sup>He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- <sup>5</sup>You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup>nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

If you have any comments, suggestions, feedback or questions, please contact us through [admin@gcgcny.org](mailto:admin@gcgcny.org).

Grace and peace,  
Covid-19 Response Team

Rev Chan – representing the church staff  
Queenie – representing the Cantonese congregation  
Edwin – representing the Mandarin congregation  
Sylvia – representing the English congregation  
Felicity – representing the Children congregation  
TK – team lead and representing the church Board of Directors