

Update from the GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team, Feb 6, 2022.

Dear brothers and sisters:

Wishing everyone God's peace and grace as we celebrate Chinese New Year.

Thank you for following all public health guidelines to control Covid-19. Thank you to everyone who have worked faithfully to prepare for our re-opening.

In our last update from Jan 4, we unfortunately had to inform everyone that, with the onslaught of Omicron, we had to shift to virtual meetings only.

We are thankful that the peak of the Omicron wave has passed. We will be restarting in-person Sunday worship services next Sunday, Feb. 13.

To protect everyone and to open safely, we will strengthen our 8 layers of protection:

1. Trust in God for our health and safety
2. Screening
3. Vaccination
4. Use of 3 layered medical grade or N95 or KN95 masks
5. 2 metre physical distancing
6. Air filtration
7. Cohorting
8. Hand hygiene & Sanitization

Everyone must follow all the Covid guidelines. Pastors and everyone still have the discretion to offer in-person pastoral care if the benefits outweigh the risks.

Please complete your Covid vaccinations and get your third dose of Covid vaccine ASAP. **With the increased availability of Covid vaccines, we will be requiring everyone >12 to have 3 doses of vaccine and everyone 5-11 to have 2 doses of vaccine by April 3** to be able to attend in-person meetings unless a valid medical exemption certificate is shown.

The reason for the above is that 2 doses of the vaccine give 30% protection from getting infected by Omicron while 3 doses give 70% protection. 2 doses give 70% protection from severe illness and hospitalization while 3 doses give 90%.

We will continue to monitor the course of the pandemic in the GTA closely and give further guidance as needed.

The guidelines below have been revised from the last version that was effective Jan 4, 2022 and will be the defining version effective immediately. All changes are in **red**.

Peace and grace,
GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team

GCGCNY Covid-19 guidance. Updated Feb 6, 2022

- 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 (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 runny/congested nose, no sore throat, no decrease or loss of taste or smell, no vomiting, nausea or diarrhea, no marked tiredness, no sore muscles or joints, no headaches.) 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. **By April 3, proof of a third Covid vaccination will be needed.** 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. **Due to shortage of the 15 minute Rapid Antigen tests, these will not be available before the start of the worship service at the entrance until further notice.**

4. Children under 12 years old not fully vaccinated yet will not require a Rapid Antigen Test to come to in person church meetings. **By April 3, proof of a second Covid vaccination will be needed for children 5-11.**
5. They maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres.
6. They follow frequent meticulous hand washing and hand sanitization.
7. They wear a well-fitted 3-layered medical grade mask. Properly worn and well fitted N95 or KN95 masks if available and tolerated would give better protection.
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. **Choir and group worship leading will not be allowed unless from the same bubble until further notice.**
13. The maximum number in a group in a room is the number that permits physical distancing of 2 metres.
14. Each person must supply and wear their own 3-layered medical grade mask. Extra ones should be brought so that if the mask becomes wet from singing, it is 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.
15. Congregational/group singing will be allowed.
16. They must use only the designated entrances and exits. They must walk only in the direction of the arrows.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. Only designated washrooms will be opened. There is a limit on the number of persons allowed in the washroom at each time.
20. 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.

21. Room use must be prebooked with Queenie at admin@gcgcny.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.
22. All children grade 6 and under must stay with their parents unless attending program arranged by KLS Children Ministry.
23. Families or social bubbles can sit together.

III. Church Re-opening Stages:

1. Live streaming at church NOW
2. Adult Worship **Start Feb 13**
3. Prayer meeting **virtual or in person per lead pastors starting Feb 13**
4. Cell groups- meeting at church or at home **virtual only now. Starting Feb 28, can be in person.**
5. Sunday School **virtual only NO IN PERSON**
6. Children activities. **virtual only NO IN PERSON**
7. use of the gyms for sports, sharing food & drinks **NOT YET**
8. New normal church function (virtual and/or in person subject to ministry needs) **NOT YET**

Starting Feb 13, we will be open for stage 3 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:

1. In-person cells or any gathering will be limited to 10 people whether at church or at home **until further notice.**

2. For at home meetings, people should wear a mask except for when eating or drinking. Physical distance of at least 2 metres should be maintained. For ventilation, a properly sized HEPA air purifier should be used. If not, at least one window should be opened and the heat turned up.

Your continued prayers would be appreciated.

Psalm 91: 1-6 (NIV)

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

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