

Bells Corners United Church (BCUC) – Policy on COVID-19 (Ver. 1; 23 Jan. 2022)

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a disruptive force in our lives, families, and communities, and BCUC is not immune to its effects. Rest assured, the Church Board (the Board) takes the threat posed by COVID-19 quite seriously. This is why the difficult, but prudent, decision was made in mid-December of 2021 to temporarily suspend in-person worship services and events in our building, due to uncertainties surrounding the severity of yet another new variant of COVID-19. However, we also recognize that the situation is continuously evolving and circumstances are subject to change in the future (for better or worse). The Board recently determined, as such, that it would be helpful to provide a clear statement on the principles and approach we apply in responding to the pandemic, especially as they relate to in-person worship services.

Principles

- *Access to Worship*: a core responsibility of BCUC is to provide worship services, open to anyone and everyone, including in-person services (when permitted). Denial of in-person access would be unduly restrictive and exclusionary, especially those for whom other options might not be readily accessible.

- *Protection of Everyone*: the health and safety of everyone is equally important, and all reasonable precautions will be taken to this end. This might include extraordinary measures at times, such as the closure of facilities, when required by law or otherwise deemed necessary by the Board.

- *Inclusivity*: we acknowledge that not everyone is willing or able to get vaccinated, owing to any number of reasons. This could include those who, for medical reasons, cannot be inoculated. Whatever the reason, their inclusion in in-person worship services and other activities – to the extent they can be reasonably and legally accommodated – is no less a priority than anyone else.

- *Privacy*: health is a deeply personal matter for many people; we respect the right to privacy of everyone. Health information will only be collected when required by law and accommodations cannot otherwise be reasonably and/or legally provided.

Approach

- *Balance of Interests*: the Board strives to maintain a balance of interests, to the degree possible, in applying the principles outlined in this policy.

- *Adherence to Authority*: the Board will always respect COVID-19 laws, rules, and guidelines applicable to BCUC operations, as determined by federal, provincial, municipal, and United Church of Canada authorities.

- *COVID-19 Safety Measures*: the Board will continue applying COVID-19 safety measures, such as social distancing, for as long as required by authorities and even longer if deemed prudent by the Board.

Questions or Comments?

Please do not hesitate to contact us (613-820-8103; office@bcuc.org) if you have any questions or comments about the BCUC Policy on COVID-19.