

July 14, 2020 UPDATE
RE-ENTRY TEAM
ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

Greetings!

I am here to bring you another update from the Re-Entry Team at St. Paul's United Church. We continue to meet weekly as we move towards returning to our church building and gathering for worship, study groups, meetings and other ministry, that we are about.

We continue to remain focused on providing the safest return for all of us. Your well-being is at the forefront of our minds as we make these difficult decisions. The East Central Ontario Regional Council of which we are part, is the governing body of the United Church that we are accountable to, not only for re-entry but for all of our ministry. The Regional Councils replaced Presbytery and Conference when the Church restructured. The direction we are receiving from our Regional Council is that we are not to consider reopening until mid-September at the earliest. For some of you, this may be disheartening, and you may be disappointed that we are not opening sooner, especially when you see other denominations moving towards re-opening or in fact have already reopened. I understand that! I too experience the same longing as you, longing to return to our church building, to a community that is face-to-face, with one another. In saying that, the Re-entry Team of which I am a part, needs to seriously consider the direction of the Regional Council, the National Church and the advice of the Provincial authorities. So, in saying that, we are moving towards a fall re-opening **IF** things continue to unfold in the positive direction that they currently are.

This week I have submitted our Re-entry plan to the Region for their approval. We have created a plan for what worship will look like when we do return. I know that many of you have heard the Province increase indoor numbers to 50 people but the reality is, we also need to maintain the 2 metre rule, that is, each person or family unit, must be 2 metres from any other. We have been in the sanctuary measuring what 2 metre physical distancing looks like. We have determined that we will be able to safely accommodate 16 "family bubble units" at any given time. We have created a process by which you will arrive at church, be seated and then exit the church upon the end of worship. Those details I will share in future updates. Know at this point, that when we do reopen, we will have 16 family bubble units at a time. A family bubble unit is a single person if they are living on their own, a couple or a family up to 4 people. These bubbles are the bubbles that you are currently living within, as you make your way through the easing of restrictions that are happening in Durham Region. If your family has more than 4 people, no worries! It simply means that you will need to occupy more than one pew. We will have more than one service each week and you will need to call into the church office to save a place for any given service. You will hear more about all of this, moving forward. At this point, I want to convey to you once again that we are moving forward steadily and cautiously but also optimistically. It is my hope and prayer that we can be returning to our worship space in the fall, maybe in smaller groups, but worshipping together, nonetheless.

Once again, thank you for your on-going prayers and support of the ministry at St. Paul's during this time of challenge and opportunity.

We eagerly want your feedback. So, I leave you with these two questions:

1. When would you feel comfortable returning to the church for worship?
2. What precautions would you need to see in place when returning, to ensure that you do feel safe?

Please give us your feedback by email to churchadmin@stpaulsunited.com

by phone at 905-623-7361

or by sending a card or note to the church office at 178 Church St. Bowmanville, ON L1C 1T9

May you stay safe, keep well and know that you are in my thoughts and prayers each day.

Blessings!

Rev. Michelle