

Re-OPENING COMMITTEE – Lorenzo Bacchetto

“Love Thy Neighbour”, that’s what we’ve been taught and strive to live out as Christians. In this time of COVID, what better way to live out that commitment than to help keep our “neighbours” safe from illness. With your hard work, understanding, and cooperation, we have been able to keep our Third Avenue family safe from COVID within our doors. At the beginning of this pandemic, we closed our doors. After a couple of months when it was clear that the pandemic wasn’t going away any time soon, we resumed Sunday services, but they were recorded and put online. When things got better and our understanding of COVID grew, we started in person services with some restrictions. Is it time to get rid of these restrictions? Many feel that it is time. When the re-opening committee last met, we decided to loosen our COVID Health Protocols. The current policy is: that the provided hand sanitizer is used upon entering and leaving the building, that a moderate amount of physical distancing be observed, and that the use of masks, though encouraged, are optional. For those who don’t feel comfortable attending church in person, live streaming of the services is available on the church website www.thirdavenueunitedchurchnb.ca. The plan is to continue live streaming even after the pandemic is over.

In the coming months, we look forward to some activities and events starting back up again. The Official Board has authorized the Worship Committee to start providing coffee time before and/or after church. They also authorized the resumption of our Sunday Brunches. Please be patient as it may take some time to get things back up and running.

With all that being said, we still have to be careful. This will be the first winter without any mask mandates in place since COVID arrived in early 2020. People will be spending more time indoors together. Seasonal viruses are circulating, including influenza and the common cold. COVID is still here and new variants are arising. We know that these diseases are infectious and are spread through the air. Now is a good time to get your flu shot, and while you are there, get your COVID booster. We know that the vaccine is safe and effective (the evidence after being used billions of times is irrefutable). Only having the initial two shots is simply not enough. If you are feeling unwell, stay home. If you have to go out, even if it seems like just a cold, wear a mask.

We will be following the course of events closely and we may need to make adjustments as the need arises. We have been and continue to do so in an effort to keep our church family safe.

"We long to return to normal, but **normal led to this. To avert the future pandemics we know are coming, we MUST grapple with all the ways normal failed us. We have to build something better." – Ed Yong**