



FAIRLAWN

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- ✚ What you told us in our recent online services survey
- ✚ Some new initiatives, including a summer of soloists
- ✚ What Fairlawn will look like when we go back

LIFE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE AT FAIRLAWN

An update from the Re-entry Task Group, July 13, 2020

Your Re-entry Task Group, Governing Council and Fairlawn staff have worked hard to help all of us stay connected during these unique times. We thank you for all your suggestions and are taking them to heart. Some we can move forward; others will take more time. We are also looking at what other congregations are doing, and speaking with them to get ideas. We, like all other congregations, are guided by Toronto Public Health's rules and procedures with every recommendation we make. Yet even with the restrictions, we have been able to introduce several initiatives.

Read on to learn more about what we are doing now, what is coming up and what is in store for us as we slowly return to our church building.

What we have heard from you so far

The *How are we doing?* survey results are in. While we are still away from our building, you've told us that you are glad that we are still doing church.

- You like what is on offer now, including the Sunday morning reflections and music curated by our Director of Music, Eleanor Daley.
- Many of you would like to see the Sunday reflections look more like Fairlawn – for example, our minister in the sanctuary and images of our stained glass windows.
- Many Fairlawn groups have gone online, and you are enjoying discussions and learning from the comfort of your own homes. And as we feel more secure about meeting within social distance guidelines, congregants with large backyards are hosting some of these groups in person.

What's new?

Necessity is the mother of invention, as the saying goes, and we have created a number of innovations during this time.

- Our Sunday reflections and music selections are pre-taped. We can view and listen to them anytime during the week. And more than once if we like.
- Many of you particularly like the new online Coffee-time Chats. And in fact, several of you tell us that you're able to talk with more people and learn more about one another this way than during the traditional coffee hour in the Assembly Hall.
- Fairlawn has always had a support ministry to keep in touch with congregants who may need extra support. What is new during this pandemic is the creation of a Telephone Outreach Ministry to connect with everyone in our congregation so we can provide an extra connection while the building is closed. Several congregants volunteered to call and were given between six to ten others to contact to check how they are doing and to say we're thinking of them. Those being called are grateful for the connection. The callers are too, as many have made new friends.
- Mid-week Prayer, an innovation we started to respond to the stresses many are experiencing during COVID-19, provides strength and support as well as an ongoing opportunity for personal reflection.

What's coming up?

- We are delighted to share the news that in the coming weeks, you will be able to see and hear some of our wonderful Fairlawn soloists perform during the Sunday morning services. We are planning for one soloist each Sunday throughout the summer.
- You will also have an opportunity to hear some of our congregants and soloists experiences as they travel on this new COVID-19 journey. Watch for this coming soon.
- We are pleased to announce that Noelle Boughton, our Communications and Events Manager, will guide our Mid-week Prayer sessions for the summer. Noelle is a spiritual director and facilitates spirituality workshops. Some of you may remember that she introduced the sanctuary labyrinth walk during our Ash Wednesday service and organized and led the *Monday Lunchtime Reflection* sessions during Lent.

Some of the challenges we are facing

- The Re-entry Task Group is keenly aware of the dangers of moving too quickly. We are doing ongoing risk assessments of all potential activity while we determine what might work now and what needs to be delayed.
- Collectively, we have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our staff, congregants, and community partners and to ensure that our actions do not contribute to any kind of local outbreak.
- It now takes much more effort, time, and careful consideration to plan any event, no matter how small, inside the church. For example, with re-entry planning, procedures and protocols, equipment set up, social distancing, and time and space for cleaning between singers, it took four hours to tape a soloist's performance of two, three-four minute pieces.

What church will look like as we return to worship in the sanctuary.

Many of you have been asking when Fairlawn will re-open for services in the sanctuary. We understand you want to get back to worship in our wonderful church. We don't know the timing yet. It is dependent upon public gathering guidelines and will not look like it used to.

While it still may be months before we can safely return to the sanctuary, we want you to know what worship services in the sanctuary will look like before a vaccine for COVID-19 is available. Please know that we will continue to follow the guidelines set out by Toronto Public Health for all activities.

If you have been checking the websites of other churches, you may be familiar with the descriptions below. For others, here is our most up to date picture of what returning to church will look like.

- We will need a pre-registration system for contact tracing and to ensure that we do not exceed the recommended maximum of 50 people. We will also have a pre-screening form to check for potential signs of the virus for those allowed to enter.
- There will be no Bibles, hymn books, or paper of any kind.
- There will be no traditional passing of the peace, congregational singing, collection or coffee hour.
- There will be a two metre separation, except for family units, so there will be no close contact, hugs, handshakes or even pats on the shoulder; There will be no communion, Spirit Space, or choir, although a soloist might perform behind a screen.
- Everyone must wear a face mask in the sanctuary. The only exceptions are children under the age of two and those with physical challenges that prevent them from wearing a mask safely.

A final word for now

We are saddened that we cannot enjoy church in the way that we are used to and that we will be apart for awhile yet. Please be assured, that even as we slowly begin to return to the sanctuary, we will continue to provide enhanced online services so those who are uncomfortable and/or at risk for the virus can still participate.

In the coming months, we will continue to work to understand your needs, attempt to meet them, and look for ways to stay connected and supported as a faith community.

We always welcome your thoughts and ideas on how we can get better. And we will listen to and consider every idea carefully. Please send your comments and/or concerns to co-chairs Rosemary Pryde and Mary Ellen Richardson gc@fairlawnavenueunited.ca Thank you!

Re-entry Task Group: Steve Dunk, Amanda Hancox, Rosemary Pryde (Lead), Mary Ellen Richardson, John Ryerson, Kathy Salisbury, and Vicki Stuart. Staff Advisors: Rev. Douglas duCharme and Marlene St. Jean.

