

May 20, 2020

Dear Wetaskiwin Mission Church family,



We just realized that our most recent update (April 8) announced the cancellation of Sunday Worship Services up to May 3rd. We are now two Sunday past that date. So, we apologize for the lag in communication.

You might be aware that the Government of Alberta has announced that Phase 1 of their re-launch strategy began on May 14. You might NOT be aware that places of worship are included in Phase 1. They are allowing gatherings of up to 50 people, with some very significant restrictions and guidelines. [If you are interested in viewing the document, it can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>]

You need to know that, as Elders, we desire nothing more than to return to our Sunday gatherings as soon as possible. After reading through that document and asking ourselves whether there was any possible way we would be able hold a Sunday Worship Service(s), one that both meets the governmental guidelines AND is in keeping with the purposes of a Worship Service as we understand it from a biblical and theological lens...

We concluded that it was not wise to move forward with public Services (less than 50) under the current guidelines, and that it is best to wait until some of those Phase 1 restrictions are broadened or removed before we attempt to have a public Sunday Worship Service again. **Therefore, we will continue with our present format of online Worship Services and evaluate on a week-to-week basis.**

The possibility that made the most sense was to have multiple Services with up to 50 people. But in our view, it would have involved too many restrictions, too much policing, and too many alterations... to have any semblance of what we envision for our Worship Services. Having multiple Services would also require many logistical steps involving many volunteers. Those steps include: organizing/assigning who attends which Service; ensuring everyone enters through one set of doors and exits through another set of doors, ensuring that people hand-sanitize on the way in and on the way out; cleaning washrooms constantly; cleaning and sanitizing the facility between Services; re-arranging seating; ensuring children remain with parents, ensuring that people are staggered when they come in, keeping track of every congregant who was present for each Service; etc.

Our hope and prayer is that the numbers stay low and that the government moves us from phase 1 to phase 2 and 3 in short order and that the requirements are not so restrictive. We are not under the illusion that once we gather, our Services will look exactly like they did when we last met in mid-March. But at the very least, we want everyone to be able to attend one Worship Service in which all the elements of the Service are possible – preaching the Scriptures, praying the Scriptures, singing the

Scriptures, reading the Scriptures, and seeing the Scriptures (through the Lord's Supper and baptism).

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these trying times. Please continue to pray for the Elders. These are not light or insignificant decisions.

We are also praying for you. And as we move closer to re-opening, we are praying that the Lord would grant that our present spirit of oneness and unity would persist into the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Your WMC Elders,

David Carlson
Andrew Chambers
Brent Houghton
John Hurd
Michael Roth
Dan Sudfeld