



The United Church of Canada

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

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May 6, 2020

Warm greetings to you all,

As I write this letter I am enjoying the sunshine and warmer weather on my balcony, one of the privileges of working from home. Yet, I am very aware that soon many of us will be considering what it means to transition back to our offices as the phases of reopening begin to affect our churches and ministries.

The Moderator, General Secretary, Staff Leaders and the Executive Ministers have been working on a comprehensive document on what to consider in each phase of reopening. It will be available soon. However, in the meantime I know there are questions and anxiety about what reopening will look like for our congregations and community ministries.

As always the Board/Council/Leadership teams are the decision-making bodies in the United Church that oversee the life and work of congregations; however, many of you are seeking further guidance. **At this time in the early phases of reopening the Regional Council is recommending that you not begin worshipping face to face any time soon.** It is also important to consider the minister's worship workload and job description. We ask Ministry & Personnel Committees to have that conversation with your ministry personnel, who have gone above and beyond in these unprecedented times.

Reopening offices is more feasible at this time, and can be done carefully, with the health and safety of all employees in mind, and by following your provincial/territorial guidelines. Increased cleaning, wearing masks, staying closed to the public except on very limited basis are all things you will need to consider.

We urge you to move slowly, consult widely and exercise caution as we continue to live in these unprecedented times. Please remember that many of our members are in the vulnerable categories and their health and wellbeing needs to be a priority in our considerations.

We will host another tri-Region zoom conversation the evening of Wednesday, May 13th to give more information and answer questions. Please watch for details in your regional council newsletter and on the websites and Facebook.

As we witness the new life that Easter and spring bring into our lives, may you continue to be well as you serve our church as faithful resurrection people.

Blessings,

Shannon McCarthy,
Executive Minister.