



Manitoba Inter-Community Travel, Dining Room, & Worship Services Openings Update

COMMUNAL DINING ROOM UPDATE

HSC can now verify that dining halls on Hutterite communities can begin operating at 50% capacity as long as the guidelines outlined below are followed.

- The number of people seated in the communal dining room must not exceed 50% of normal capacity.
- The flow of traffic into or out of the dining spaces should flow in a single direction to limit interactions between persons.
- Sanitizer stations should be established at each entrance and signs posted encouraging people to practice good hand hygiene.
- Manitoba Health recommends a 6-foot dividing line between people waiting in line to be served
- The Public Health Orders in Manitoba prohibit buffet-style food service. Manitoba Health recommends that each individual's plate is dished out by a team of servers. Only the servers should handle the dishing utensils.
- Further, Manitoba Health strongly recommends that a plexi-glass divider separates the food to be served from community members. An alternative would be to add a narrow table between the food and the person served in order to increase the distance between the communal food being dished and the person being served.
- The Public Health Orders allow groups of friends and/or acquaintances to sit together at tables in groups of up to 25. Although it's allowable to sit reasonably close, it's recommended that groups space themselves by 3-4 feet outside of immediate or extended family members.
- Group sizes per table cohort must not exceed 25. There can be multiple groups of up to 25 per table group in the room, but each table group should be separated by 6 feet.
- Singing: Choir singing is currently not permitted by Manitoba Health because of the proximity of choral members to each other and due to a higher risk of transmission through singing as compared to speaking.
- Care must be taken when exiting the dining hall to stagger the groups leaving so that intermingling is reduced.

We would recommend that people read "[**Bulletin #20: Cleaning and Disinfecting our Community Kitchens**](#)" and "[**Bulletin #21: Food Handling in our Community Kitchens**](#)" for further information.

Please keep in mind that the risk of virus transmission is not over. If the virus enters a community without protocols in place, the spread among Hutterites would be quick and extensive. Let's keep the safety protocols in mind and be mindful of the vulnerable among us.

INTER-COMMUNITY TRAVEL

After consulting with Health Manitoba, HSC offers the following updates for inter-community travel:

- Visiting immediate family members is fine (brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, grandparents, etc.), but safe practices should remain in place, such as regular hand-washing, disinfecting of often-touched surfaces, and so on.
- Outdoor spaces have a lower risk associated with them, so it's recommended that people spend time out of doors whenever possible.
- Non-essential travel remains not recommended by Public Health Officers. If you do visit, exercise caution.



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For travel outside Manitoba:

Health Manitoba continues to advise people that travel from outside of Manitoba is restricted and anyone entering MB for non-essential travel is subject to mandatory 14-day isolation. Further, non-essential travel to and from the USA is currently suspended until at least June 21. That is, entry is not permitted. As all of Manitoba continues in Phase 2 of the opening strategy, we must all continue to be mindful of the risk of a second wave. Historically, these have been more devastating, but through cautiousness, it can be avoided.

WORSHIP SERVICES REOPENING

As many of you are aware and as we indicated in our update two weeks ago, Phase 2 of the Manitoba Reopening Plan began on May 22 with further services restored on June 1. This signals that the chance of COVID-19 spreading rapidly and overwhelming the health care system, while not entirely gone, is considered to be significantly decreased. This is because of how well most Manitobans have responded to the Public Health Orders. It also makes it possible to make further changes in how we gather for worship services.

HSC consulted with Manitoba Health on how to practically apply this to our setting and together we arrived at the following:

- Two groups of 25 can gather in our churches as long as the two groups are segregated. This can easily be accomplished in our churches because women and men already sit apart from each other. (The aisle can be understood as a sufficient barrier.) Another way of accomplishing this would be, for example, to have the north-side congregants of the community to sit on the north side, and the south-side congregants on the south side.
- The maximum number of congregants under one roof should still be kept at 50, even in situations where space and aisle layout may allow for more groups.
- Spacing between the groups of 25 should be 6 feet. In community churches where the center aisle is less than 6' wide (space between men and women sections) restrict the seating immediately next to the aisle to create an effective space of 6' between the groups.
- People should be spaced no less than 3-4 feet.
- Where possible the groups of 25 people should use separate entrances. In cases where community churches have a single entrance the groups should stagger their entrance so that all of one group enter followed by the 2nd group. Minimize mingling of the groups as much as possible.
- Good hygiene (e.g. frequent hand washing) continues to be the single most effective practice individuals can engage in to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus. Hand sanitizer should be used by all congregants as they enter the building.
- Congregational singing in church is deemed safe if adequate (3-4') spacing is maintained. At this time, Manitoba Health does not permit choral singing. Manitoba Health recommends keeping singing time under 10 minutes.

As with many of the previous changes and challenges we have faced, these measures are all temporary. The expectation is that more changes will be forthcoming in 3-4 weeks.

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