

I am Susan Dupuis, Council Chairperson.

June 17, 2020

The Ontario government announced that as of Friday, June 12th, places of worship would be allowed to open limiting attendance to 30 per cent of building capacity and practicing physical distancing. At this time no further guidelines have been put in place.

We received a letter from Bishop Pryse on June 8th addressing the re-opening for in-person services. He says "Many of us, while mourning the absence of in-person worship, have grave concerns about our congregational capacity to ensure a safe and healthy environment in which to gather." "I have also clearly heard that our pastors and deacons would welcome a directive." As such, it is my strong recommendation that our Synod's congregations not contemplate initiating in-person worship experiences within our church buildings until the beginning of September at the earliest."

On June 12th, we received a letter from Bishop Pryse advising that a Task Force on the Resumption of In-Person Worship has been formed. Their mandate will be to develop guidelines for congregations to support both their preparations to re-open for in-person worship and their ability to protect the safety and wellbeing of all those who gather.

A meeting was held on Tues. June 16th to discuss re-opening our church for in-person services here at Zion. We took into consideration the Bishop's recommendations and concerns. We discussed measures that would have to be taken to keep our membership safe. The number one concern was "how do we keep our members and Pastor safe?" A motion was put before the council that reads as follows "We so move that the church remain closed to in-person services until September 1st, 2020. At that time, we will be reviewing this matter again."

The results were a unanimous acceptance of the motion.

The Ontario government also opened up some of the restrictions placed on weddings and funerals.

After much discussion the following motion was put before the council.

"We so move that the church remain closed for in-person funerals until September 1st, 2020, at which time the matter will be reviewed again."

The results were a unanimous acceptance of the motion.

So, we will not be resuming in-person services or funerals here at Zion until sometime in the future. We want to ensure the safety of our congregation. We hope you will continue to view our on-line services, watch the DVD's being delivered to those who have asked for them, or to read the copies of the homilies being delivered to 70 members.

May God continue to bless us with abundant gifts of hope, forbearance and patience as we navigate the significant decisions and choices that will need to be made going forward. Peace be with you!