

Adopted by Congregational Council: October 9, 2020

Biblical Foundation: Mark 12:28b-31

“Which commandment is the first of all?” 29 Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

We at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, as a part of the larger body of Christ and followers of Jesus commit to acting out of nothing but love for our neighbor. We seek to live our mission “to glorify God by serving and witnessing in the community and the world.” This mission to glorify God leads us to serve our neighbor through providing a physical environment that is safe for worshippers and participants. We normally do this with protocols to keep children and elders safe from abuse, and we now worship in ways that keep the most vulnerable among us safe from illness in any pandemic.

Overview

In love for our neighbors Our Savior’s Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and volunteers, as well as anyone who uses our facilities. To ensure that, we have developed a Preparedness Plan for response to a pandemic. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of infection in our Church Building.

This Pandemic Preparedness Plan includes and describes how we will implement, at a minimum, the following:

1. Infection prevention measures - hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
2. Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons.
3. Engineering and administrative controls for social distancing.
4. Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfection and decontamination.
5. The Homecoming Committee will create communications and training for staff and volunteers necessary to implement the plan and ensure effective ongoing adherence to the plan.

Infection Prevention Measures

Hygiene and respiratory etiquette will include:

1. Handwashing frequently, for at least 20 seconds.
2. Frequent use of hand sanitizer.
3. Covering your cough or sneeze with a mask, tissue or at least into one's elbow.
4. Avoiding touching your face, nose, and mouth.
5. Keep at least a 6 ft. distance between someone else.

Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons: If you develop symptoms or become sick while at home, do not come to the church building. Contact the Lead Pastor and Congregational President if you develop symptoms or become sick while at work go home immediately and contact the Lead Pastor and Congregational President. Screening at entrances may include temperature checks and symptom checks.

The Congregational President will follow the plan outline and reference a [decision tree](#) when approaching each situation.

Provide applicable information: about the infection information, isolation/quarantine terms, available resources¹, and applicable compensation policies². Upon notification of an infected staff member, we will:

1. Open an [incident report](#)³.
2. Identify & isolate staff workspaces and potential other affected areas.
3. Notify staff about potential exposure.
4. Notify additional staff and volunteers as necessary.
5. Clean & disinfect affected areas.
6. Ensure that the identity of sick/potentially sick staff remains confidential.

Building and Ventilation Protocols

General Building Conditions completed by the Building & Grounds Committee.

Prior to opening the church building again, we have:

1. Followed established protocols⁴ for starting mechanical, electrical, plumbing, lifesafety, and other systems after non-use.
2. Reviewed CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>).

¹ See Faith Based Community documents from Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

² See [OSLC Employee Handbook](#)

³ See [Incident Report](#)

⁴ See MDH guidelines for Industry Guidance "Employee Preparedness Plan"

3. Inspected windows, fans, and air conditioning, following CDC recommendations. New air filters will be placed every six months and filters will be HEPA quality. Ceiling fans will remain off. Windows can be opened.

Day-To-Day Operations: Once systems are in a safe operational status, we will ensure the following practices and protocols are maintained:

1. Eliminate air recirculation as much as possible.
2. Supplementing the ventilation-system with the use of portable HEPA filter units will be done at this time. If future regulations require HEPA units, this will be addressed.
3. Keep systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible) to enhance the ability to filter contaminants out of the air.
4. Maintain relative humidity levels of RH 40-60%.
5. Our Savior's does not have a flush system or cycle on the controls of the HVAC system.
6. Check and maintain the HVAC system as advised.
7. Consult an HVAC professional or the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers to ensure proper ventilation is provided, and ventilation-systems are properly maintained. See ASHRAE's COVID-19
8. Preparedness Resources (<https://www.ashrae.org/technicalresources/resources>)

Work week:

9. Continuously maximize fresh-air into the work and communal spaces.
10. Ensure the office space at Our Savior's provides adequate space for each occupant and that the ventilation system for the office space provides proper air exchange.
11. Staff can choose to open windows and close office doors as needed.
12. The main office door will remain locked at this time.

Sunday morning:

13. Minimize air-flow from blowing across people. The ventilation system and ceiling fans will remain off during in-person worship. Windows in the sanctuary do not open. Side door in the sanctuary may be opened during worship when weather allows.
14. Air Conditioning/Heating temperature will be adjusted 3-4 degrees cooler/warmer than usual 90 minutes prior to in-person worship. The system circulation will be shut off 15 minutes ahead of worship. The HVAC system should be turned back on two hours after in-person worship has ended.

Facility Hygiene Practices

Sanitation: The building will be thoroughly sanitized before and after each worship service, including all entryways and doors. Documentation will be provided for when all cleanings take place. (See Appendix for CDC guidelines for cleaning.)

Hymnals and Bibles will be removed from pews.

Offering plates will be available at the back of the sanctuary, and will not be passed person to person, along with any other items.

Children's "quiet bags" will not be made available. If so desired you can bring your own quiet items from home for your children.

Hand sanitizer will be available at all entryways.

Air flow (non-mechanized) will be increased as much as possible, opening windows and doors, as weather permits.

Restroom Use: Only two persons will be allowed to enter a restroom at a time, unless members are of the same immediate family. A marking of some kind will be placed on the floor outside of the restroom to indicate where people should stand in line to wait to use the restroom, maintaining 6-foot distance from each other.

Office Use

Staff will limit the number of people in the office to maintain social distancing. Members wishing to meet/see staff will need to make an appointment before coming to the church. Staff are encouraged to avoid using their individual offices for meetings to allow for further physical distancing.

All meetings with visitors/staff will need to be on a centrally accessible calendar to enable other staff to adjust their schedule if they wish to avoid being in the office at that time. Groups will be assigned rooms to allow for distancing within and between groups. For example, groups of 10 or more will be encouraged to meet in the Fellowship Hall; groups of 2-5 could meet in the Fireside Room.

Worship

Our primary opportunity for worship will continue to be on Sunday mornings via radio, TV, and Facebook Live. We strongly encourage those over the age of 65 and individuals with a compromised health condition to worship online or with the radio broadcast. This is because they are more susceptible to contracting the coronavirus; for their own safety as well as for the desire of others to protect them.

Beginning October 18, 2020 those who desire to gather in-person will once again be welcome to join us in the sanctuary with social distancing guidelines and mask wearing protocols being followed. Worshipers will be asked to reserve their seat ahead of time online or through the church office by Thursday at noon. East and West doors of the narthex/lobby will be open. Entrance by the office will be locked on Sunday mornings. When entering all will be asked to

check in for their reservation, screened for symptoms, temperatures checked, and wearing masks. Disposable masks will be made available for those who do not bring a mask.

All in attendance will be required to wear a mask, with the exception of children ages 2 and under per CDC guidance. We recognize that children 2-6 are learning to wear a mask. Worship leaders will wear a mask until they are speaking or singing, during which they will be 12 feet from all others.

Anyone showing any symptoms of illness, or anyone who has a household member who is sick or showing symptoms of illness should not attend; this includes pastors or other leaders who are sick or showing signs of illness. If someone arrives showing signs of illness (fever, persistent dry cough, etc.) will be asked to go home.

Occupancy of the worship space is not to exceed 50% of capacity, with social distancing guidelines in place. Only 1/2 of the pews will be in use and there must be at least six feet of distance between immediate families in each pew. This will result in our capacity being approximately 80 people. Overflow seating can be utilized in the narthex/lobby if necessary. Ushers will dismiss row by row, back to front.

During worship the congregation will be asked to refrain from singing with worship leaders/cantors, humming will be encouraged. Pastors and worship leaders will be required to wear a mask at all times except when they are speaking. They will also remain 12 feet from the congregation when leading worship.

No social gatherings of any kind will be allowed either before or after worship services in the building. People will be instructed to arrive and depart expediently.

For other worship services (weddings, funerals), we encourage those to be celebrated outdoors if possible. Outdoor services must maintain 6 ft social distancing guidelines between immediate families, with no more than 250 people present. If indoors, weddings and funerals will be kept to a 50% capacity of the physically distanced plan for the sanctuary (42 people max).

A special quarantined worship will be offered on Wednesday afternoons for households who are extremely limiting their exposure to the community. Families with work or school exposure to others would be welcome to attend on Sunday morning, this special service would be reserved for those who are immuno-compromised.

If demand for in-person services grows beyond the capacity of one Sunday service, we will consider additional services as needed.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion will be offered at each Sunday, Wednesday and at any scheduled service(s). Social distancing guidelines, and sanitation procedures will be followed as outlined above. The elements for Communion will be purchased as prepackaged kits and be prepared ahead of time into separate baggies while wearing a mask and gloves. The elements will be handed to each household as they enter by a masked and gloved volunteer. The pastor will lead the Communion from the chancel and will not hand the elements directly to the communicants. The worship space and items used for Communion will be sanitized between each service.

Communion will also be available by home delivery upon request. A team of volunteers will prepackage a kit with communion elements and directions for reviewing the Words of Institution and the words "Given for you." These kits could be delivered to the doorstep of those who cannot attend worship in person.

Singing/Choirs

Because singing has been shown to increase the amount of droplets produced, thus increasing the potential spread of the coronavirus, congregational and choral singing will not be allowed. The congregation will be allowed to hum with masks on during Sunday services.

The pastor(s), a cantor, or soloist may sing, provided they are at least 12 feet from others. The same rule applies for instrumental performances.

Other Considerations

Greeting: People will be instructed to not greet each other with touching, maintaining social distance of at least 6 feet with those outside of their immediate family. There will be no greeting line after worship, people will be instructed to leave the building immediately after worship.

Children: Special attention will be given to children to make sure social distancing is practiced. Parents will be encouraged to speak with their children before coming to the facility to let them know that the expectations at church will be similar to school.

Contact Tracing

A sign-in sheet will be kept at the entrance to the building. Anyone attending an activity or worship service at the church will be asked to provide their name and phone number, which will be written down by themselves or a greeter.

If a person present at an event tests positive for COVID-19, we expect them to report to the pastor or Congregational/Council President. The church staff and council will take the advice of the local health authorities as to the best practices for contacting others who were present at the

time. The contact information of those potentially exposed will be shared with the Department of Public Health for contact tracing.

Names and phone numbers will not be disclosed to the public or used for any other purposes.

Implementation and Communication

It is the responsibility of the Homecoming Committee and OSLC Council to communicate these guidelines to the congregation as well as any others who may use the facility. A summary will be included in the October newsletter 2020. These guidelines will be made available both electronically through email to our members and to the public on our website as well as by request through the church office.

These guidelines will be communicated to anyone who wishes to use the facility for a wedding, funeral, or baptism by the staff member coordinating that event. This will be done both verbally and by providing either a physical or electronic copy to the party using the facility.

These guidelines are subject to change as local conditions allow. If someone that has tested positive has been in the building, all in-person activities in the church will be cancelled for at least 2 weeks, or as long as necessary. Also if the area schools go to full distance learning for all ages, we will postpone all in-person activities until school has opened their buildings again.

Appendix A – Guidance for developing an Employer Preparedness Plan General

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus (COVID-19) –

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus –

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus

State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – <https://mn.gov/covid19>

Faith-Based Communities

CDC: Resources for Community and Faith-based Leaders

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

CDC: Resources for Large Community Events & Mass Gatherings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>

MDH: Community and Faith-based Organizations Guidance

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html>

MDH: Guidance for Faith-Based Communities Considering In-Person Services

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaithserv.pdf>

MDH: Guidance on Hosting Faith-Based Services in Parking Lots

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaithpark.pdf>

MDH: Guidance for Visiting People at Home

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/visitingathome.pdf>

MDH: Ramadan 2020 and COVID-19

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guideramadan.pdf> 10 Last updated:

05/23/20 – 12:00pm

Businesses

CDC: Resources for businesses and employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC: General business frequently asked questions – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

CDC: Building/business ventilation – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: Businesses and employers: COVID-19 –

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

MDH: Health screening checklist –

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: Materials for businesses and employers –

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): COVID-19 information and resources – <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/>

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 – www.dli.mn.gov/updates

Federal OSHA – www.osha.gov

AIHA Back to Work Safely <https://www.backtoworksafely.org/>

Handwashing

MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages –

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html 11

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html