

Our Savior's Lutheran Church COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Worship Services

Plan Administrator: Rich Ratka, Worship Elder

Our Savior's Lutheran Church seeks to provide a worship service that meets the theological doctrine of the LCMS and the health guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health.

This plan was developed by the Our Savior's Lutheran Board of Elders with advice from the OSL Church Health Ministry Council in accordance with the Minnesota Department of Health guidelines for safe worship. Sanitary techniques have been observed in preparing the communion elements and cleaning/disinfecting common surfaces to protect your safety.

General recommendations for worship attendance:

- Congregants are asked to observe social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times.
- Congregants are strongly encouraged to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth at all times.
- Occupancy for indoor worship is limited to a maximum of 75 people and 5 staff per service at this time. Admission to an indoor worship service will be first come, first served to the maximum of 75, with services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 am. **We ask that members attend the service that corresponds to their last name – 8:00 a.m. for those whose last name begins with A-K and 10:00 a.m. for L-Z.** Unfortunately, you will not be able to enter the sanctuary if you arrive after capacity has been reached.
- Since the primary mode of transmission of the virus is through physical contact, you are asked to not touch anything in the sanctuary you don't absolutely need to touch.
- The most effective way to protect yourself is to not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth from the time you enter the worship service until you leave and can wash your hands/ use sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance of the sanctuary. Using your own hand sanitizer saves church expense. Donations of sanitizer are appreciated.
- The restrooms will be available, but we ask that they are only used when necessary. The only bathrooms open will be the two outside of the south door of the sanctuary.

Note: The drinking fountains will **not** be available. No food or beverage is allowed.

Participants should conduct a self-check & stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

1. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
2. Congregants should stay home if they have had a significant exposure, intercontinental travel, or have pre-existing health conditions that may increase their risk*. Please consult the MN Department of Health website or your doctor if you have questions.
3. Congregants who do not have any of the above risk factors but feel uncertain about their safety are encouraged to stay home. The worship service will still be available for viewing on the Our Savior's Lutheran Church Facebook and on local TV. If you are unable to attend, but would like to receive the Lord's Supper, please contact Pastor Oster to make arrangements. He will be available until noon in the sanctuary on Sunday for those who would like communion following the services.

Entry into the sanctuary

- **The front door of the sanctuary is the only access to the sanctuary.** Do not use other doors for entry. Unless you have a specific worship-related purpose, do not enter other parts of the building outside of the sanctuary.
- After parking in the parking lot, proceed to the front door. If a line has formed, maintain 6 feet of separation as you wait to be ushered inside to your seat.
- Front doors will be propped open; please do not touch the doors as you enter.
- Please use hand sanitizer when you enter/leave the sanctuary.
- People will be seated by the ushers with six feet between people who do not live in the same household.
- A receptacle for your offering will be available as you enter. The offerings will then be brought forward during the appropriate time of the worship service.

During the worship service

- Paper bulletins will be provided. Please take it home and dispose of it.
- Hymnals will be available, and hymns will be printed as we will be singing!
- All liturgy, songs, and scripture readings will be available for viewing in the bulletin. The screens in the sanctuary are currently inoperable so you will need a paper bulletin.

Communion Distribution

- A continuous line will be employed during the distribution of the bread and wine, maintaining 6-foot distancing while in line. You will be ushered per pew to communion.
- Hold out your hand, palm up, so the pastor can place the communion wafer into your palm. Do not attempt to take the wafer from pastor or make contact with him or any utensil he may be using to distribute the wafer.
- The wine will be served in individual plastic cups. When taking your cup from the tray, please be careful not to touch any other cups in the tray.

- Dispose of your communion cup in the receptacle provided.
- Return to your seat, again maintain 6-foot distancing.
- Children should remain in their pew during communion as there will be no blessing from the pastor.
- The blessing will be spoken when all have communed.

Leaving the sanctuary at the end of the service

- Please stay in your seat until you have been dismissed by an usher.
- Greet people briefly outdoors, but do not shake hands or hug.
- Proceed to your vehicle in the parking lot while maintaining 6-foot distancing.
- Do not gather in groups in the parking lot

For those unable to attend, worship services will continue to be available on the church Facebook page and on HCVN. Please pray for one another, for our congregation, and for the staff of OSL.

Please be patient as we begin many new changes to our worship service. Thank you!

In Christ,

Pastor Kevin Oster

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Board of Elders

***Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:**

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease