



COVID-19 Safe Start Plan

October 20, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The following document contains guidelines that will be followed as St. John plans for a safe and healthy reopening during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines are intended to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Michigan and the Southeast Michigan Synod of the ELCA. This document is not intended to be comprehensive and may change from time to time as more information becomes available.

GENERAL SUMMARY

St. John Lutheran Church remains committed to being a *Sanctuary that Welcomes and Serves All* and recognizes that the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has been disruptive to members of our community and our congregation. We have shown an inspiring commitment to each other, our community, and our mission through our online worship and fellowship activities, and as we move toward a return to in-person worship we will do so with a commitment to public health.

As such, our reopening plans will generally follow the guidelines of the State of Michigan's "Phase 5" Safe Start Plan. Phase 5 allows for gatherings of 50 or fewer people and calls for continued use of facemasks and social distancing. Our worship space can accommodate these guidelines.

MASK REQUIREMENT

All persons, including staff, worshipers, building users and visitors, adults and children over the age of 2, must wear a mask while in the building. Masks may be homemade or store-bought, fabric or disposable. Disposable masks will be available in the narthex for Sunday worship.

CLEANING/SANITIZING

- Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, benches, and bathrooms will undergo cleaning after every gathering and before the next use.
- Shared computers will be disinfected after every use.
- Cleaning and disinfection products will be stored properly and safely per instructions on the label.
- Staff will wear gloves and a face covering when performing all cleaning activities.
- The HVAC system will be maintained on a regular basis and filters changed on the appropriate schedule.
- Outside building users are required to clean at the conclusion of their activity.
- St. John's regular cleaning service will clean and disinfect the sanctuary, narthex and main restrooms on Saturday in preparation for Sunday worship. Cleaner will use an anti-viral solution for cleaning high touch surfaces.

HYGIENE

- Signage will be placed on doors and around the building showing the correct way to wear a mask, reminding people to cough or sneeze into their elbow, and strongly suggesting that people who are unwell not enter the building.
- Signage will be placed in the restrooms to teach and reinforce correct handwashing procedures with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the proper use of hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in the narthex for people entering for worship.
- Our cleaning service will clean the narthex, sanctuary and restrooms on Saturdays prior to worship services and will assure that adequate supplies of soap and hand sanitizer are available.

SCREENING

St. John Lutheran Church will cooperate with the local public health department regarding implementing protocols for screening staff, worshipers and other building users.

Every individual entering the building must fill out a form indicating their current health status, provide their name and phone number, and have their temperature checked. If their temperature is above 100.4°F, they will be asked to leave.

A person who answers in the affirmative to any of the questions will be asked to leave.

Screening Questions:

1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> fever or chills | <input type="checkbox"/> headache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cough | <input type="checkbox"/> new loss of taste or smell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> sore throat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> congestion or runny nose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> muscle or body aches | <input type="checkbox"/> nausea or vomiting |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> diarrhea |

2. Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Are you currently waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Print Name: _____

Phone number: _____

CONTACT TRACING

A record will be kept with the name and phone number of each person who enters the building each day so that if someone reports having tested positive for COVID-19, others who were in the building at that time can be contacted. Records will be kept for 30 days. Building users will be required to collect and maintain their own records.

POSITIVE CASES

St. John Lutheran Church will cooperate with the Oakland County Health Department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

- Symptomatic staff members must stay at home until they have tested negative for COVID-19 or have been released from isolation according to CDC guidelines.
- Any member of the congregation who tests positive for COVID-19 is asked to have a confidential conversation with the Pastor in a timely fashion regarding this information, and indicate when they were in the building during the past 14 days.
- Building users are required to notify the Church Office if a member of their group has tested positive for COVID-19 and identify when this person was in the building.
- The Oakland County Health Department, staff and building users will be notified immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

WORSHIP SERVICES

When worship services in the sanctuary resume, there will continue to be an online option for those who prefer it. In-person worship will be suspended immediately if the Board deems it necessary for the safety of staff and worshipers.

Members over the age of 65, those with disabilities and/ or serious respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, people who are immune compromised, and children under age 3 to are strongly encouraged to consider remaining at home until a later time, and are encouraged to worship online.

Preparing our Worship Space

- Non-essential items have been removed from the pews, including hymnals, writing implements, etc.
- Signs have been posted reminding members of non-contact greetings and the use of facemasks, handwashing and social distancing.
- Masks will be available in the vestibule outside the narthex for those who have forgotten to bring one.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in the narthex and all worshipers will be required to use it before entering for worship.
- Trash receptacles will be readily available for disposal of wipes, tissues, etc.
- The Baptismal font will remain dry, except when a baptism is taking place.
- Members attending worship will not be permitted in any areas of the building except the narthex, sanctuary and main restrooms. The gym may be used for entry and check-in if required.
- Doors will be propped open and remain so as much as possible.
- Restroom doors will be propped open and signage will be placed limiting occupancy to 2 persons.
- The nursery will be closed, and there will be no in-person Sunday school.

Worship Guidelines

- Worship gatherings will be limited to 50 people, including the pastor, musicians, worship leaders and volunteers.
- A greeter will ensure that each worshiper is wearing a mask, completes the necessary screening procedure and waits to be directed by the ushers.
- All worshipers will be seated by an usher. Ushers will fill the space from the front to the back, using every other pew and observing a 6-foot distance between family groups. Individuals who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition will be seated in the far left section (as viewed from the narthex). Families with small children will be seated in the far right section.
- The service will be projected on the screen. No bulletins will be distributed.
- Instrumental music only will be provided during the service. Members of the congregation will be discouraged from singing.

Worship Guidelines *(continued)*

- Sharing of the peace will be done without contact. Worshipers will remain at their seats.
- The offering plate will not be passed through the pews, and members will be encouraged to offer financial gifts electronically. An offering plate will be placed in the narthex and will not be processed to the front of the church. Worshipers will be requested to place their offering in the plate on their way in.
- Communion in one kind (wafers) may be observed. Only traditional communion wafers will be used. Prior to distribution, the Pastor will retire to the sacristy to wash his/her hands and return to the sanctuary for distribution.
- Communion consisting of a pre-packaged wine/wafer combination may be used. This would be picked up by each worshiper upon entry to be consumed at the appropriate time in the service.
- Candles will be lit by the ushers prior to the service and extinguished after dismissal.
- Dismissal from the worship space will be done in a planned and organized manner, led by the ushers, beginning at the back of the sanctuary and ending at the front. Members will be asked to leave the building as quickly as possible.

OTHER USE OF THE FACILITY

- All building use other than worship services and staff work must be approved by the Board.
- Outside user groups must present their COVID safety protocols prior to approval of their use of the space and must abide by all St. John policies.
- The kitchen will be off-limits unless specifically allowed by the Board.
- The gym may be used for socially-distanced meetings, but not for athletic activities.
- Outside groups will be asked to dispose of their trash in the dumpster.

FINAL NOTE

These guidelines are subject to change at any time to align with best practices as described by the CDC, the State of Michigan's Safe Start Plan and The Southeast Michigan Synod.