

## **Plan for in-person service events**

We strive to reopen our church building in a manner that follows official guidelines. Nevertheless, gathering in groups poses additional risks for disease transmission. Individuals with health concerns or those who are hesitant to attend services in person are encouraged to continue participating in services online from home.

As church reopens for services, please remember that we can accommodate 25% of our stated building capacity at each service event (max. 125 people). This number includes those who are serving as pastors, service directors, ushers, music leaders and others.

We ask all service guest to please:

- Fill the sanctuary starting from the front to back as guests arrive.
- Maintain social distancing of six feet between households for the entire service.
- Wear masks when indoors.
- Remain seated after the service, and ushers will dismiss the congregation by rows.
- Exit the building promptly to allow building sanitizing following the event.
- Depart the church property in a timely manner.

## **Additional Recommendations:**

- Stay home if you or a member of your household is not feeling well and have any symptoms that could be the flu or COVID-19. Consider participating in services online from home.
- Avoid greeting by handshake.
- Make donations online or in the designated collection box in the entry as desired.
- Avoid socializing in doorways or the entryway to keep social distancing available for entering and exiting the church.
- Freely use hand sanitizer which will be available by the entry doors.
- Cover your cough or sneeze. If tissue isn't available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Doors will intentionally be propped open.
- Coffee lunch and meals will not be available.
- Water fountains will be turned off.
- Please keep bathroom use to a minimum.
- The Service Director and Ushers will be available to answer questions and assist with traffic flow.

Adrian Pirness, Chairman

Paul Hillukka, Vice-Chairman

## **COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Laestadian Lutheran Church of Elk River**

**The Laestadian Lutheran Church of Elk River** is committed to providing a safe and healthy church for all those who serve (workers), for congregation members and for visitors. To ensure we have as safe and healthy church as possible, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers both during service events as well as the facility committee, cleaning committee, and board of trustees are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church and communities. This requires full cooperation from those who serve (workers) and our congregation members. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons.

The board of Trustees and Facility Committee, workers, and congregation members are responsible for complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We encourage anyone to ask questions, raise safety and health concerns and offer suggestions related to the plan and its implementation.

We are serious about the safety and health of all who participate in events at **The Laestadian Lutheran Church of Elk River**. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the State of Minnesota Industry Guidance for our organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines related to safety and health precautions required in response to COVID-19, and applicable executive orders. The plan addresses the following:

1. policies and procedures that assist in the identification of sick attendees (congregants or workers) and ensure those that are sick remain home.
2. implementation of engineering and administrative controls for social distancing.
3. attendees to practice safe hygiene and minimize transmission.
4. church building and ventilation protocols.
5. church cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
6. drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocols.
7. additional protections and protocols for receiving and exchanging payment.
8. additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy.
9. additional protections and protocols to limit face-to-face interactions.
10. additional protection and protocols for distancing and barriers.
11. Communications, training and supervision practices and protocols.

### **1. Policies and procedures that assist in the identification of sick attendees**

Congregation members are encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. This includes checking temperatures. Information regarding symptoms can be found on the CDC and the MN Dept of Health websites (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>; <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>). Attendees who have underlying medical conditions are encouraged to continue attending remotely. Anyone who is not feeling well or if anyone in a household does not feel well, the entire household shall remain home. In the event someone becomes ill while in attendance, they will be isolated in the office until they can either be transported or travel to their home.

In the event a congregation member has a confirmed case of COVID-19, they are encouraged to:

- Follow the direction provided by their health care provider including remaining at home and contacting those individuals they have been in contact with.

- Notify a board member if they have attended a church event in the days prior to developing symptoms or testing positive. The board will communicate the dates of potential exposure to the congregation. Names will be kept confidential.

## **2. Social distancing – maintaining six feet of physical distancing**

Social distancing of six feet will be implemented and maintained between households through the following engineering and administrative protocols:

- The number of attendees (workers and congregants) shall not exceed 250 persons which is 50% of our occupant capacity.
- Every second pew will be available for seating in the sanctuary. Markers will indicate which pews are not available.
- A distance of 6 feet between family units will be maintained within each bench.
- Dining room seating will be reduced to 50% of occupant capacity and spaced to accommodate 6 feet of social distancing between households.
- Signage to encourage social distancing will be posted.
- Attendees will vacate the church immediately following each event.
- Coffee lunch and meals will not be available at this time.

## **3. Attendees to practice safe hygiene and minimize transmission**

Attendee hygiene and source controls will be implemented at our church at all times.

- Signage reminding attendees to cover cough and other necessary safe hygiene protocol will be posted.
- Water fountains will be turned off. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own water.
- Hand sanitizer will be available. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own.
- Bathrooms will be available, but attendees are asked to minimize usage as much as possible.

## **4. Building and ventilation protocols**

Necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems including water, plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems will be conducted prior to reopening. The following HVAC protocol will be in place:

- HVAC systems will run continuously two hours prior, during events, and two hours after to maximize air filtration and normally when events are not happening.
- As weather allows, doors will be propped open to allow for outside airflow during events.
- Water fountains will be turned off.

## 5. Cleaning and disinfection protocols

Regular housekeeping practices will be implemented, including routine sanitizing of the facility and frequent sanitizing of high-touch areas. Workers have been instructed that personal equipment and tools should not be shared and, if shared, should be disinfected between users. Cleaning and disinfection will happen as follows:

- Regular scheduled cleaning will continue.
- Sanitization including wiping down door handles, hard surfaces including benches, tables, and chairs available for seating, and bathrooms, will happen immediately following each event. Doors will be locked to allow for this to happen.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

## 6. Additional protections and protocols for receiving and exchanging payment

Collections by plate will not happen during the service. Attendees are asked to make donations online or deposit in the collection box located in the foyer.

## 7. Additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy

A sign-up system will be implemented for high attendance events with a maximum capacity of 50% (250 people) including workers. Scheduled ushers will ensure that we remain at 50% capacity. Attendance numbers will be monitored and adjusted as needed. Guests beyond the allowed 250 will be asked to return to their vehicles.

## 8. Additional protection and protocols for distancing and barriers

All attendees are asked to exit the building as directed by the service director and ushers at the end of each event.

## 9. Communications, training and supervision practices and protocols

The updated COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was provided by identified congregation communication channels and by email where possible to **all congregation members on July 18, 2020** and necessary training for workers was provided. The Board of Trustees, Facility Committee and scheduled workers will monitor how effectively the program has been implemented by **monitoring attendee numbers and interaction during services. Adjustments will be made as deemed appropriate** This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by **The Laestadian Lutheran Church of Elk River board of trustees** and was posted on **July 19, 2020**. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by:



Adrian Pirness  
LLCER Board Chairman