In the words of ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the church has never been closed. This document is a summary of the guidelines and parameters that are recommended as the faith community of St. James Lutheran Church prepares to resume in-person activities within our building. Even as use of the facility resumes, all faith partners are encouraged to participate only to their level of comfort. A robust program of online worship and faith formation opportunities will remain available for the foreseeable future.

The procedures and recommendations within this document are subject to change due to the fluctuating nature of the COVID pandemic and our need to respond with flexibility to ensure the safety and health of all who enter our building.

VALUES

Exhibit our care and concern as Christians for our neighbors by protecting and preserving our community as a whole through preventative measures

Follow guidance of various ecumenical, community, and governmental experts

Make decisions based on what is most life-giving

Place the needs of the most vulnerable at the forefront of decisions

Consider the impact on staff workload and on finances

Communicate openly and in dialogue with faith partners

Individuals bear personal responsibility to monitor own health and to recognize the potential of transmission even when asymptomatic

GENERAL GUIDELINES

All guidelines will be modified as needed based on recommendations of authorities mentioned above. Additionally, much of the timeline will be dependent on the availability of supplies needed to promote health safety and cleaning of the facility. A delay in access to supplies may prevent use of the facility.
Regardless of the nature or size of the gathering, anyone choosing to participate physically in any activity taking place within the church building also agrees to cooperate with the following procedures.

Safety policies and procedures

- Masks/face coverings required for all adults. Effort will be made to accommodate children (over age 2) who have difficulty wearing a mask.
- Sign-up in advance so we can limit attendance; sign-ins required to facilitate future contact tracing should it be needed.
- Self-screening for temperature and/or symptoms prior to arrival.
- Hugging/physical contact is not permitted.
- Do not attend if feeling unwell.
- Faith partners who are members of high-risk categories are discouraged from attending.
- Remain at a distance of at least 6 feet from those who are not in your household.
- Keep internal doors open to facilitate air flow and minimize touching handles.
- Frequent use of hand-washing and sanitizers which are distributed throughout building.
- Designated parking and outdoor walkways to facilitate physical distancing.
- No children’s activities/programs that require group contact.
- Comply with all posted and verbal directions regarding safeguarding everyone’s health.
- All shared food and drink are prohibited.
- Use of single-occupancy restrooms only.

Additional procedures under consideration

- Assigned seating to know who attendees were near.
- Restrict attendance to anyone who has traveled to a country or region on the CDC’s Level 3 Travel Health Notice within the past 14 days. (link)
Resuming Use of Church Facility

- Individuals will self-quarantine and report to appropriate county health authorities if they have tested positive or have come into contact with someone who is positive

I. The workplace

While most staff will continue to work from home, procedures are in place to allow working in the facility.

- One-on-one appointments for counseling, etc. are permitted
- Non-employees should schedule a time to come to the facility rather than dropping by

II. Small gatherings

While current guidelines allow for small group gatherings, it is still essential to critically evaluate the value of meeting together in balance with potential risk.

Any group wishing to gather in the building needs to review this request with their ministry team leader or corresponding staff member. This will allow us to manage the demand for facility use as well as ensure that proper cleaning and sanitizing protocols are followed.

- Consider “hybrid” meetings where participants who choose not to participate in person can still participate remotely through video and/or audio conferencing
- Follow the occupancy limits for each room. Groups may need to relocate in the facility.
  - Sanctuary - 60
  - Fellowship Hall - 22
  - Fireside Room - 12
- The facility will be available to internal groups only, not to outside groups who use/rent the facility (there are currently very few of these)
III. Congregational worship

The way we gather for congregational worship is affected in so many ways by the nature of needed safety precautions. As of this time we are following the recommendation of Bishop Mark Holmerud of the Sierra Pacific Synod to consider NOT returning to in-person worship in any manner before the end of July. The parameters put in place are subject to change based on new information and guidance. Worship leaders and staff continue to seek and receive feedback regarding our online offerings. They will work to accommodate requests as often as possible, making changes such as recording portions of the service in the sanctuary.

Due to the logistics required for holding worship outdoors, the task force does not recommend regular outdoor worship as a viable solution.

Additional worship policies and procedures include

- Pre-record portions of the service to be broadcast during the service
- No singing - may offer instrumental/devotional music
- Limited vocal responses by congregation
- Reduce occurrences of Communion and modify distribution methods
- No handouts (bulletins, hymnals)
- Physically distanced seating
- Attendance limited by reduced capacity (25% of the maximum occupancy approved by the fire marshal)
- Worship service will still be video recorded for those not attending in person
- Host only one live service per day to minimize possible contamination and need to sanitize
- Sufficient volunteers to direct attendees, monitor health screening, promote physical distance standards
- Posted reminders of safety precautions
IV. Facility maintenance

Careful scheduling and monitoring of those who are accessing the facility will allow for natural elimination of the virus along with timely cleaning and sanitizing. It is imperative that the workload associated with this extra maintenance be considered.

- Purchase supply of sanitizer and cleaning supplies
- Create protocol for cleaning of space once it is vacated
- Identify mechanisms to optimize air flow in accordance with expert recommendations

Task Force Members

- Chair: Sandra Hamilton Slane – Council VP
- Stacy Little - R.N.
- Luiza Mainenti, M.D.
- Brad Askeland – Grocery industry/essential workers
- Jonna Rossow, ex officio
- John Clark, M.D.
- John Waldrop – County employee/St. James facility care
- Nic Day – Law enforcement
- Pastor Bob Swartz, ex officio
- Bob Grosch – Mental Health/Crisis response
- Katie Swartz, educational advisor
## Reference documents

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<td>24 Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return</td>
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