

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Bethel Lutheran Church

Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures apply to Bethel Lutheran Church and its members. Bethel Child Care Center maintains its own policies and procedures.

Bethel Lutheran Church recognizes that COVID-19 is a global pandemic that presents a new and serious challenge to communities and health care providers. In the spirit of the Good Samaritan, Bethel Lutheran wants to nurture and protect the health of everyone. It recognizes the authority of the state and federal governments to make public health decisions.

However, Bethel also recognizes that isolation poses health concerns as well. In addition, the scripture encourages us "not to neglect meeting together". Therefore, Bethel Lutheran Church restarted in-person services on May 31 in accordance with state law and recommendations.

Measures taken by Bethel Lutheran Church to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

State Requirements:

- A. Develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan
- B. In indoor settings, occupancy must not exceed 50% of total capacity, with a maximum of 250 people in a single self-contained space.
- C. In outdoor settings, gatherings must not exceed 250 people.
- D. Strongly encourage all persons to wear masks.

Occupancy must not exceed 50% of the total capacity.

For the sanctuary, total capacity is 300 giving a 50% capacity of 150. This is above average church attendance so no conflict is foreseen.

Strongly encourage all persons to wear masks.

All members attending service are encouraged to wear a mask. If a member is personally unable to obtain a mask, several congregational members have sewn cloth masks for donation. A member may contact Pastor Kindem, 308-0414 or Sally McIntyre, 751-0759 to facilitate obtaining a mask. All those who chose to wear a mask are encouraged to review safe practices.

Ensuring Sick Members Stay Home

Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklists

[\[https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf\]](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf) will be posted at the front doors, and in modified form in announcements. Anyone who answers yes to any question on the checklist for himself, or a member of his household, should stay home.

Social Distancing

Households should maintain 6 feet of separation at all times. Pews have been marked to facilitate this. Members are expected to maintain distance while waiting for communion as well as when entering and exiting the building.

Member Hygiene and Source Controls

Hand-washing and cover your cough signs are already in place in each bathroom. Hand sanitizer is available on the narthex table and at the altar.

Bathroom doors should be left open.

Fellowship food and drink is suspended for the present.

Water fountains will be marked as off limits.

Communion will no longer be held at the railing but by 'drive-through'. Assistants will sanitize their hands and wear gloves and masks.

Offering plates will be left on chairs for members to drop offerings in instead of being passed.

Any paper bulletins/announcements will not be handed out but spread out among the pews to reduce the number of people who touch them. All announcements and the entire service will be projected to eliminate the need for any paper copies. Announcements and bulletins will continue to be posted on the website if members wish to print their own copies.

Delivery Practices

Staff should maintain 6 feet of distance during deliveries. They should use their own pen for signing and wash their hands afterwards.

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

Cleaning and disinfecting will be left to the hired cleaning service who has been cleaning to the standards of the Minnesota licensed child care, Bethel Child Care Center.

Most estimates for the viruses' survival on surfaces from paper to plastic is less than the week between services. [<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/tips-for-keeping-your-home-clean-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>]. Thus, no measures will be taken to disinfect electronic equipment, hymnals or pews. However, if the weekly schedule is disrupted, users are encouraged to disinfect equipment as they feel comfortable, with recommended products. [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>]

Communications and Training

These policies and procedures will be read and approved by the Church Council. They will also be posted on the Church website and mailed out. All members are expected to follow them.

Procedure if a member, or household member, tests positive for COVID-19.

If a member, or someone in the household of a member, tests positive for COVID-19, and the member was in the church building at anytime within 2 weeks before showing symptoms they must inform Pastor Kindem, 308-0414 or Sally McIntyre, 751-0759 as soon as possible. They will be in charge of determining who may have been exposed and coordinating efforts to contact those affected, encouraging them to be tested and self-quarantine for 14 days. The Child Care will be informed immediately via Manager Powell and the same is expected from the Child Care.

Church Services will be suspended for 2 weeks.

Areas the member frequented will be marked for special cleaning following the CDC guidelines. [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>]

Approved by the Bethel Lutheran Church Council, June 9, 2020.