

COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan for Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church

This plan document was developed to support implementation of public health activities required to minimize the spread of COVID19 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and was informed by CDC, Minnesota Health Department, ELCA, St. Paul Area Synod and Brotherhood Mutual Insurance guidance.

Developed by: Facilities Safety Taskforce
Date: May 28, 2020

Approved by: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Congregation Council
Date: July 6, 2020

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Plan

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy facility for our staff, members, and visitors. This plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure we implement strategies and procedures to preserve public health. It is expected that the entire church will have a role in implementing this plan to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 within our facility and our community that would result in a disruption to our mission. Therefore, all persons in our facility will be expected to comply with all aspects of this plan. The church leadership and council have full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

This plan has been developed with church staff and members of the Facilities Safety Taskforce. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health, ELCA, St. Paul Area Synod and Brotherhood Mutual Insurance have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate including:

- Hygiene, cleaning, and disinfecting;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Controls for social distancing;
- Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfection and decontamination;
- Communications and training that will be provided to persons on-site; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

This preparedness and response plan assumes the following:

1. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will follow guidance from the Minnesota Governor, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Evangelical Church of America, the St. Paul Area Synod and from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance.
2. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church personnel will fall into different disease risk categories and decisions for return to the facility will be made in accordance with medical and public health guidance for risk stratification (e.g. age, health status). Our Saviour's Lutheran Church's role is not to determine the risk level of individuals; rather the church leadership should ensure that individuals can make their own informed choices and be supported.
3. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church personal and activities resumption will occur in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The COVID19 situation will evolve and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will remain adaptable and nimble to the dynamic environment. The baseline level of risk for those working and using our facility will change as restaurants and retail businesses reopen, schools reopen, etc., requiring a reassessment of what level of resumption and precautions are appropriate.
5. Those staff functions that can practically stay at home to complete work will do so until Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is fully opened to minimize large gatherings.

6. Social distancing, wearing of masks or other appropriate PPE, hand-washing, and disinfection of surfaces are key factors to reducing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
7. Large gatherings are unlikely to be safe over the next several months. Worship services, and other large gatherings should be carried out online.
8. Personal responsibility is key to safe operations and the avoidance of disease transmission. Educational materials will be developed for staff, members, and visitors to the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church facility.

COVID-19 Plan Management

The COVID-19 church coordinator is Joyce Nelson, and is responsible for COVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan with the Facilities Safety Taskforce. All staff in the facility will be provided with the coordinator's name and how to contact the coordinator with any COVID-19 concerns. Joyce Nelson can be reached at joyce.nelson@osel.org or 651-437-9052. Infection control and occupational safety and health plans will apply to anyone working in or visiting the church (e.g., all staff, members, and visitors).

- The church has reached out to state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals and established ongoing communications to make sure they are getting relevant and up-to-date information concerning COVID19.
- The church coordinator and staff leadership are aware of and will follow all applicable regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Federal guidelines: Center for Disease Control (CDC)

State guidelines: Minnesota State Health Department

Affiliation guidelines: Evangelical Church of America, St. Paul Area Synod, Brotherhood Mutual Insurance

- Facility assessments to identify COVID-19 risks and prevention strategies should be done periodically as part of sound occupational health and public health practice. This plan will be reviewed as necessary to ensure effectiveness.

Facility Public Health Measures

Infection prevention measures are being implemented at our facility in accordance with public health guidance and best practices.

Handwashing

Anyone in the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church facility is instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of

their time on-site, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled are located at entrances and throughout the facility.

- “Clean Your Hands!” posters are located in all restrooms providing proper hand washing methods.
- In occupied areas, custodial staff are checking and replenishing soap dispensers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer stations at a minimum of once per day, and more often in heavily trafficked public spaces.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Everyone is asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face—in particular their mouth, nose, and eyes—with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of in the trash and individuals should wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette reminders appear on posters and tissues and trash receptacles are readily available.

- The CDC “Stop the Spread of Germs” posters are posted in all building lobbies and other common areas.
- Tissues in common areas.
- Employees are expected to wear cloth face coverings (masks) in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Individuals may bring their own mask, or Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church will provide them.

Social distancing

Everyone entering the facility is asked to practice social distancing on public health guidance and best practices. These measures may be adjusted according to phases of this preparedness and response plan.

Remote Work and Adjusted Onsite Hours

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church has implemented the following procedures and practices for remote work and adjusted hours. All staff will meet with their supervisor to determine an individual plan for work location based on responsibilities and risk levels.

- Telework is approved and expected for all persons who can accomplish their primary duty functions from home.
- Staff are provided guidance and training to work remotely by their supervisors.
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks. Equipment questions should be directed to their supervisor.

- Flexible hours and staggered shifts are available to minimize the number of persons in the facility at one time. Flexible work hours should be discussed with the employees' supervisor.

Onsite Work

Staff, members, and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas where six feet separation cannot be maintained. Staff, members, and visitors should wear masks at all times. Masks may be removed when staff are in their personal offices and where six feet of separation is feasible.

- Shared staff offices are assessed and where feasible staff are reassigned to other working areas or alternate hours to maintain social distancing.
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing supplies are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed of in the trash after use.
- Staff will avoid using anyone else's personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment.
- Common spaces such as conference rooms are rearranged to promote social distancing.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by Our Saviour's Lutheran Church staff in accordance with CDC guidance. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g., work rooms) and high-touch areas (e.g., door handles and buttons).

- All custodial staff and their supervisors are provided refresher training on proper cleaning techniques, as well as background information on COVID-19.
- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, the Building and Grounds Lead will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.
- The Custodian or Building and Grounds Lead will clean public spaces such as the entry, the building lobby, and the restrooms. Disinfecting and sanitizing regularly, and more frequently if deemed necessary, will specifically focus upon highly touched areas: light switches, door handles, handrails, elevator buttons, water fountains, water closet and toilet handles, faucet handles, table surfaces and arm rests.
- Routine preventative disinfecting and sanitizing of personal workspaces and electronics are up to the individuals, unless there is a confirmed positive case.
 - If there is a confirmed positive case reported to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, the Building and Grounds Lead will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.

Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines, and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms. These will be discussed at the weekly staff meeting and emailed to staff. All COVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff at the weekly staff meeting and by email with updates occurring as necessary.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church has leave policies that encourage staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies are listed in the Employee Handbook.

- Sick Leave
- Vacation
- Temporary Disability Leave
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Paid Sick Leave (Federal)

Questions on leave policies should be directed to Joyce Nelson, Administrator, at joyce.nelson@osel.org or 651-437-9052.

Employee Self-Screening for those Working On-Site

Staff members should conduct self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of the virus often include but are not limited to fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Information on COVID-19 signs and symptoms are available at the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/symptoms-and-signs/).

Staff must report symptoms to their supervisor if they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Employees exhibiting symptoms should not come into the church.

- Take your temperature in the morning and when you return home from work. Log those results and report any fever to your supervisor.
- Report any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals, respiratory symptoms, sore throat, or dry cough to your supervisor.
- If the employee indicates any of these conditions, the supervisor may require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

If an employee begins to exhibit symptoms at work, the employee should report to their supervisor and should leave the workplace immediately.

Confirmed Cases

If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a staff member or in a member of their household, the staff member will be asked to remain at home and considered to be in quarantine for no less than 14 days. A facility assessment will begin to determine what additional public health and cleaning measures should be implemented.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will work with the Minnesota Department of Health to inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in our facility, and the Minnesota Department of Health will provide instructions regarding staff self-quarantine measures.

Consistent with compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), staff members' health status and health information will be protected.

Communications and Training

This preparedness and response plan is communicated with staff, congregational council, members, visitors and others via electronic means and U.S. postal service. Training is available to staff and persons using the facility.

- Return to Work Training (Discussed at weekly staff meetings and by email)
 - Topics should include but not limited to: Personal Protective Equipment, disinfection measures, social distancing protocol, COVID-19 signs and symptoms information, return-to-work policies, self-monitoring practices, signage, time-off options and all other COVID-19-related safe workplace changes.
- Enhanced COVID Cleaning is modeled from the McGill University's **COVID-19 Preventing transmission - Environmental cleaning** (YouTube May 13, 2020).
- Our Saviour's Lutheran Church facility use handout

Facility Use

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church serves as a gathering place for congregation and community members. Gathering purposes in the congregation include: congregational work, support to social justice missions, celebration events, community meeting, and social engagements. Use of the facility will be based on the phases of this plan and align with state guidance and policies. Priority will be given mission related activities.

Any group that would like to use the facility while this plan is operational must request use using the Request for Facility Use form (Appendix A). Each request will be reviewed by an internal committee designated by church leadership.

If approved, each group utilizing the facility will be required:

- Review training provided by Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
- Share Our Saviour's Lutheran Church facility rules with participants
 - Conduct appropriate social distancing
 - Wear masks
 - Wash hands
 - Cover your cough
- Take attendance to include name and contact information

No member of the congregation or community may use the facility until they have received approval from the staff of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

Resources

Appendix B provides a list of resources to support the church's decisions and activities during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church Phases

The purpose of this phase approach is to provide guidance and direction for activities at the church. The disease progression is imperfectly known and there may be times where Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church may need to move back and forth between phases.

| External Conditions | Church Activities |
|--|--|
| Phase 0: Hibernation | |
| <p>External Conditions: Cases presenting in the state with limited community spread and testing is limited.</p> <p>Criteria (for phase): Government and organization leaders are initiating plans for social distancing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess risk to staff and congregation ● Meet with church council to determine facility hibernation plan ● Cancel or postpone facility onsite activities ● Plan for social distancing activities ● Meet with staff and initiate plan for hibernation activities |

Phase 1: Stay at Home

External Conditions:

Government Orders for communities to stay at home. Disease spread is occurring in the community and hospitalizations are increasing. Testing is limited and there are widespread PPE shortages.

Criteria (for phase):

Government issues stay at home orders.

Church Activities

Worship

- Worship services move to online delivery.
- Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 feet of space between people.
- Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) are postponed and all participants notified.

Activities on-site

- Our Saviour's Lutheran Church staff will telework when able
- Staff may return to the facility to acquire equipment and record worship segments.
- Bible studies and small groups will meet online.

Phase 2: Sunrise

External Conditions:

There are declining case count trends and availability of testing is increasing. Contact tracing is in place and PPE is available for social distancing purposes (e.g. cloth masks).

Criteria (for phase):

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to the facility.

Church Activities

Worship

- Worship is held online.
- Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 feet of space between people.
- Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptisms) should be kept to less than 10 in attendance and be able to maintain social distancing. Approval is required.
- Use of masks is highly encouraged.

Activities on-site

- Bible studies and small groups continue to meet online.
- Office functions are limited to ensure essential operations.
- Church council and leadership teams of less than 10 might consider meeting in person while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, or continue meeting online.
- Facility users/renters may be allowed with approval and based on size and mission. Social distancing and public health measures will be enforced.
- Wearing of masks is highly encouraged.
- Outdoor worship and activities with social distancing measures implemented per local guidance.

Stay home if sick or showing ANY signs of illness.

Keep 6 feet or more distance from any other attendees than your family unit.

Face coverings are highly recommended.

The church building will NOT be open to the public (no restrooms).

Sit in designated area only.

Stay in family units.

Leave with all belongings you came with including chairs, blankets, trash, etc.

Phase 3: Sunrise Plus

External Conditions:

Government leaders continue relaxation of social distancing measures. Cases of COVID19 continue to decrease and testing is available. PPE is widely available.

Criteria (for phase):

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to campus

Church has the ability to gradually expand number of people in the church while maintaining social distancing

Church Activities

Worship

- Worship is held online and in-person with social distancing measures implemented per local guidance. Multiple services may be considered to spread out participation.
- Weddings and funerals may be held in-person with social distancing measures implemented per local guidance.
- Entrance and exit into the church will be designed to avoid gathering.
- Communion may be offered in alignment with public health guidance. Consultation with ELCA and St. Paul Area Synod authorities will occur prior to offering.
- Group singing may be considered based on recommendations by public health authorities.
- No-touch alternatives for passing the peace, collecting offering, and liturgical resources. Hymnals and bibles will be removed from the Worship Center. Bulletins will not be used and screens will be used as alternatives.
- No fellowship/social hour will be scheduled during this phase. People are encouraged to leave the building after the service (no mingling).

Activities on-site

- Bible studies and small groups meet in person while maintaining some online options for high risk individuals and those who do not feel comfortable being in public. Approval is required.
- Office functions resume as normal, with attention to cleaning.
- Groups, teams, and committees could meet in person. Approval is required.

High risk individuals (people over 60 and those with underlying conditions), whether staff, volunteers, or program participants, should continue to shelter in place during Phase 3.

Social distancing and public health practices (e.g. wearing masks) will be implemented while at church and in community ministry, as is recommended in public spaces.

Phase 4: Normal Operations

External Conditions:

There are no or minimal state restrictions. Vaccine available. Widespread testing and identification of new COVID-19 cases, with quarantining is occurring.

Criteria (for phase):

No or minimal state restrictions.

Church Activities

Business as usual.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Activities Chart

| | Phase 0 | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|---------|
| Worship Services | Online | Online | Online | In-Person with Social Distancing | Normal |
| Students | Online | Online | Online | Online | Normal |
| Ministry Events | Online | Online | Online | In-person with Social Distancing | Normal |
| Office Staff | Remote | Remote | Remote / Onsite with Social Distancing | Remote / Onsite with Social Distancing | Normal |
| Community Groups | Online / Postponed | Online / Postponed | In-Person with permission and Social Distancing | In-person with permission | Normal |
| Life Celebrations | Postponed | Postponed | In-Person with permission, groups of less than 10 people | In-Person with permission | Normal |
| Outdoor Activities | Postponed | Postponed | Onsite with Social Distancing | Onsite with Social Distancing | Normal |

Appendix A – Request for Facility Use

Request for Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church Use

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church priority continues to be the health and safety of all members of our community. However, we also recognize that our facility supports the missions of our congregation and our community. Consistent with the state of Minnesota orders and public health advice, this form will enable church leadership to identify who might be permitted back to use the facility, starting first with groups who support essential church and social justice missions for our congregation and community.

For everyone’s safety, the church’s intent is to slowly and gradually invite groups back. Decisions for facility use will be based on phases of the Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church Preparedness and Response Plan. To facilitate approval for use of our Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, please complete the following form.

Name:

Group Size:

Will this gathering be repeated (e.g. weekly)? If yes, describe frequency.

Date for gathering(s):

Provide a brief summary of the gathering.

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church will provide guidance for use of the facility.

Appendix B - Guidance for developing a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

General

CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

ELCA Guidelines - www.spas-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ELCA-returning-to-In-person-worship.pdf

Businesses

CDC Resources for businesses and employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC General business frequently asked questions – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

Federal OSHA – www.osha.gov

Handwashing

www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

Social distancing

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

Housekeeping

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

Training

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html

www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf