

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for In-Person Worship

Zion Lutheran Church of Warroad, MN

Updated February 9, 2020

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been created to meet the requirement stated in the *Guidance of Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies* from the Minnesota Department of Health (9/18/2020).

I. Communication of Preparedness Plan

- A. Placed on Zion's website
- B. Displayed in the Gathering Space

II. Screening of Attendees

- A. All members, guests, and visitors are to stay home from worship services if they are sick
- B. Each person is to conduct a self-screening prior to leaving home to come to worship services.
 - 1. If you have any of these symptoms of COVID-19, you must stay home: fever greater than 100.4, cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, fatigue, severe headache, nasal congestion, or runny nose.
 - 2. If you have any concerns about symptoms, please contact LifeCare Medical Center Emergency Room at 463-2500.
- C. People who are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 infection should strongly consider refraining from attending worship services.
 - 1. This includes people who are over 65
 - 2. People of any age with underlying medical conditions
- D. Signage will be posted at the main entrance advising people with symptoms of COVID-19 or people that are at higher risk for COVID-19 infection to refrain from attending services.

III. Face Coverings

- A. All attendees and participants are required to wear a face covering per MN Executive Order 20-81.
- B. Attendees are encouraged to wear their own personal face coverings.
- C. A disposable face covering will be provided at the door, for those who do not have one.
- D. If someone cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition, a mental health condition or a disability, they will be directed to worship in the Fellowship Hall.
- E. Musicians and worship participants may temporarily remove face coverings while they perform/read/preach.

IV. Occupancy

- A. Occupancy must be reduced to allow for the required social distancing of at least 6 feet between people who do not live in the same household.
- B. Occupancy must not exceed 50% of total capacity, which at Zion is 137.
- C. Individuals not a part of a household group must be separated by at least 6 feet
- D. Household groups must be separated from other household groups by at least 6 feet.
- E. Musicians must maintain 6 feet distancing between each other.
- F. Musicians, minister, and all worship leaders must be separated from attendees by a distance of at least 12 feet.

V. Entering the Church Building

- A. All participants must enter through the main entrance.
- B. Ushers will indicate when attendees may enter to ensure that social distancing is maintained in the gathering space.
 - 1. This will only be done when weather permits
- C. Please keep your coat with you, as the coatroom will not be available for use. This is due to the fact that social distancing must be maintained.
- D. Upon entering the building, all attendees will sanitize their hands.
 - 1. If a person is unable to use hand sanitizer, he/she will be directed to the restroom to wash their hands.
- F. If bulletins are used, they will be handled to participants by an usher or greeter.

VI. Entering the Sanctuary

- A. Upon entering the sanctuary, offering plates will be available for those attendees wishing to place their offering in.
- B. On Communion Sundays, communion elements will be distributed prior to entering the sanctuary.
 - a. Choice of elements include:
 - i. Wine with bread
 - ii. Juice with bread
 - iii. Wine with gluten-free bread
 - iv. Juice with gluten-free bread
- C. Ushers will usher you to your seat.
 - 1. Attendees will be seated beginning in the front of the church.
 - 2. Every other pew will be used.
 - 3. Households will be seated together

VII. During the Worship Service

- A. Hymnals and Bibles will not be available during the worship service.
- B. Attendees are allowed to use a “whisper voice” while participating in the service.
- C. Attendees are allowed to sing using a “whisper voice.”
- D. Reminder that attendees must wear a face covering at all times.
- E. There will be no “passing/sharing of the peace” during the service.

- F. Parishioners that tend the sound booth on a particular Sunday, must be from the same household as 6 feet distancing is not possible.
- G. If anyone starts to cough during the worship service, they must leave immediately.
- H. Shared equipment such as microphones will be disinfected between users.

VIII. Leaving the Sanctuary

- A. Worshipers will be ushered out of the church.
- B. Ushering out will begin with the back pews.
- C. Ushers will dismiss people to allow for social distancing in the gathering space.
- D. When ushered out, worshipers are asked to leave the church building immediately. Visiting and fellowship is not permitted.

IX. Spaces Within the Church That Are Not Available on Sundays

- A. Coat Room
- B. Nursery
- C. Kitchen
- D. Sunday School Rooms (area beyond the bathrooms)

X. Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

- A. All cleaning and disinfection protocols will be follow as stated in the CDC document entitled *CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home*.
- B. Zion will ensure that adequate cleaning supplies, hand soap, hand sanitizer, and tissues are available at all times.
- C. The sanctuary and other utilized areas will be cleaned and disinfected after each worship service.

XI. Building Safety

- A. Zion's Property Community will ensure that the building is safe and properly maintained.
- B. Proper ventilation protocols will be followed.
 - 1. The annual HVAC system inspection was completed Fall, 2020
 - 2. Maintenance including replacement of air filters was completed Fall, 2020
- C. Sprinkler system and fire extinguishers will be properly maintained.
- D. Annual safety inspection was completed Fall, 2020

NOTE: If Roseau County data indicates a significant rise in the number of COVID-19 cases, or if evidence of COVID-19 spread is associated to worship services at Zion, or if mandated by the State of Minnesota, Zion will cancel in-person worship services until it is safe to return. This decision will be made by Zion's SMART Team along with consultation from LifeCare Public Health and/or the Minnesota Department of Health.

Resources

<https://www.elca.org/PublicHealth>

-Considerations for Returning to In-person Worship

<https://nwmnsynod.org/>

-Questions to Ask Before Starting In-Door/In-Person Worship for the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html>

-Guidance for Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship and Ceremonies

-Industry Guidance for Safely Reopening: Faith-Based Communities, Places of Worship, Weddings, and Funerals

-Music Activities and Performances During COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

-Community and Faith-Based Organizations: Plan, Prepare and Respond

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/checklist.html>

-Checklist for Community and Faith Leaders

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-faith-based/faq.html>

-FAQs for Administrators and Leaders at Community-and-Faith-Based Organizations

If clarification is needed, please contact SMART Team Chair, Deb Landin, RN, PHN, LSN at 242-2583.