

Protocol for Indoor Worship at First Lutheran Church, Morris MN

A Task Force of over a dozen people total met on two occasions to provide the church council with proposed plans for indoor worship. The Task Force read and used recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the MN Department of Health, our own SW MN Synod guidance and the document called *Resuming Care-Filled Worship and Sacramental Life During a Pandemic: The Ecumenical Consultation on Protocols for Worship Fellowship, and Sacraments* for guidance. The Task Force's recommendations were adopted by the Council at the October 20, 2020 meeting with a couple of additions.

We as your Council realize that some of these policies will make worship different than we are used to. Our goal is to provide a meaningful worship experience, allowing us to hear the Word of God and receive the sacraments while also maintaining a safe gathering to worship. We want everyone to be able to safely and earnestly worship.

Masks and Physical distancing: In order to minimize risk, we are asking everyone

- To wear masks.
- To maintain physical distancing of 6+ feet apart at all times in the building.
- To stay home if you have any symptoms or any exposure to someone that has tested positive.
- To quarantine if you have tested positive or have been around someone who tested positive.

Services:

- One Sunday service at 9:30 a.m.
- Maximum of 60 people in sanctuary/nave/worship space.
- Up to 15 people in Fireside Room.
- Ushers will usher you in, and out at conclusion of service.
- Soloists, piano and instruments will provide music. We will refrain from singing. Humming along with the soloist or liturgist is acceptable.
- Pews will be marked to show how to maintain physical distancing.
- Nursery will not be provided.
- We will use a Power Point projected on the screen for following along with worship. No bulletins.

Ushers:

- Head usher and assistant ushers will usher worshippers in and out of the sanctuary.
- They will remind or ask you to wear a mask if you forget.

Building:

- We will ask you to enter through front main doors or elevator side doors at parking lot. Ushers will usher you out of the sanctuary.
- We ask that you leave the building after worship, with only the briefest visiting as you go out.
- Visiting after worship is a normal and understandable desire. We ask you to limit this to only passing greetings. Please do not enter into long conversations, unless you are outside the building.
- There will not be fellowship time or any food served at this time.
- Restrooms will be open.

Masks:

- Everyone must wear masks except children 2 and under;
- If you are unable to wear a mask while in the church building and during the worship service for any reason, we ask you use the online viewing option instead of attending.

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Sign up system:

- At least to begin with, we will have a sign up system so know who is in worship and to limit the number of people in worship on any given Sunday morning.
- Reservations will be on a first come, first served basis. To sign up:
 - call the church office and leave a voice mail on Rita's extension (320.589.3242 ext. 100)
 - text Rita on her cell phone (320.287.2384)
 - email Rita at the church office (office@flcmorris.org)
 - submit an on-line reservation form on our website at www.flcmorris.org
- A list will be kept so we can trace those in attendance in case anyone becomes ill.
- Sign up by Friday at 12 noon.

Communion:

- We will have communion on the first and third Sundays *to begin with*. Prepackaged containers will be available for you as you enter worship space. These will contain both the wine and bread. Communion will be taken while staying in the pews; not at the altar, which will allow for distancing. At the end of the service you can either take the used container home to dispose of it, or dispose of in a waste basket as you leave worship.

Weather and Covid

- In the event of bad winter weather, if we cancel worship we will contact the radio (KKOK/KMRS) and send out email and Facebook posts.
- In the event that the Morris Public Schools goes entirely to online learning (meaning no *in-school* learning) we will switch to *only* online worship via Facebook Live and YouTube on our website. Again, we will publicize this using the above means.