

St. Stephen 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, and in the spirit of loving our neighbor, all persons in our facility and/or on our grounds 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 by the work of the COVID-19 Plan Committee including Pastor Jim Woodruff, Pastor Juli Thompson, Randy, Amborn, Cindy Scott, Tom Scott, Jill Sandvik, Chris Sheldon, Karen Smith, and Melissa Whitman. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health, the ELCA, and Governor Walz' relevant orders 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 assume the following:**

1. St. Stephen Lutheran Church will follow guidance from Governor Walz, the Minnesota Department of Health, and from the ELCA.
2. St. Stephen 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). St. Stephen 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. St. Stephen Lutheran Church personal and activities resumption will resume all activities in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The COVID19 situation will evolve and St. Stephen 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. For the purpose of minimizing large gatherings, the work of St. Stephen Lutheran Church that practically can, will be completed remotely until St. Stephen Lutheran Church is fully opened.
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. Worship services, and other large gatherings should be carried out online or outside while using responsible social distancing practices until we move to our next phase of opening.
9. Personal responsibility is key to safe operations and the avoidance of disease transmission.

**COVID-19 Plan Management**

The COVID-19 church chairperson is Juli Thompson and is responsible for COVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan with members of the COVID-19 Smart Team. All staff in the facility will be provided with the coordinator's name and how to contact the coordinator with any COVID-19 concerns via phone or email. 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).

## Church Staff: Remote and Onsite Work

St. Stephen Lutheran Church has implemented the following procedures and practices for remote work and onsite work. All staff will meet with their supervisor to determine an individual plan for work location based on responsibilities and risk levels.

- Remote work 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.
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks. Equipment questions should be directed to Jim Woodruff

## Onsite Work Protocols

When working onsite, staff, members, and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas where six feet separation cannot be maintained. Staff, members, and visitors will wear masks when they are unable to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another. In other times while working onsite, staff, members, and visitors will have a mask available to use, but are not required to wear it when working independently or responsibly physical distancing. Masks may be removed when staff are in their personal offices and where six feet of separation is feasible.

- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed in the trash after use.
- Whenever possible, staff will avoid using anyone else's phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment. Staff will disinfect all equipment and furniture they used by using a sanitizing wipe or solution upon completion of using the equipment and furniture.
- Shared staff offices are being assessed, and where necessary and feasible, staff are reassigned to other working areas or alternate hours to maintain social distancing.
- Common spaces such as break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms will be rearranged to promote social distancing.
- Housekeeping: Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by St. Stephen Lutheran Church staff in accordance with CDC guidance. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g. break rooms) and high-touch areas (e.g. door handles, railings).
- 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 among staff reported to St. Stephen Lutheran Church Pastor Juli Thompson will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space Custodial Staff will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, and door handles at least once daily, and more frequently if deemed necessary.

## Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies for Staff

St. Stephen Lutheran Church will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines, and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms via email. All COVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff. Any updates will be communicated within 24 hours of the update.

St. Stephen 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.

Questions on leave policies should be directed to Pastor Juli Thompson.

## 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. Staff must report symptoms to

- Take your temperature in the morning and when you return home from work. If their temperature is 100 degrees or more, they will not come to work and they will inform Pastor Juli Thompson of their symptoms.
- 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, they should leave the church and report their symptoms to Pastor Juli Thompson.

### **Confirmed Cases Amongst Staff**

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.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church will inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in our facility, and the employee who was exposed will self-quarantine as recommended by the CDC. Consistent with compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), staff members health status and health information will be protected.

### **Worship**

We have never stopped worshipping. It is St. Stephen Lutheran Church's intention to re-enter for worship services and other uses of the church facilities and grounds in a series of phases. This document currently addresses only Phase 1 of this re-opening. It is the intention of the COVID-19 Plan Committee to meet regularly to discuss potential modifications to Phase 1, and any future phases.

#### **Phase 1 – Online or Outdoor Worship Online Worship Services Outdoor Worship Services**

Outdoor worship services will be held on the north lawn of St. Stephen Lutheran Church beginning July 15, at 6 p.m. and each Wednesday thereafter, until further notice. As always, everyone is welcome. In the event of inclement weather the service will be cancelled.

### **Outdoor Service Public Health Measures**

In the spirit of loving our neighbor, St. Stephen Lutheran Church expects compliance with the following procedures for all worshipers at the outdoor services:

- **Masks:** All worshipers will be expected to wear masks at all times on the grounds of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, children over 2 should wear a mask if they are capable of wearing it properly per CDC recommendations. If a worshiper does not have a mask, St. Stephen Lutheran Church will have a limited supply to offer. The worship team, including the pastor, because they will be physically distant by at least 15 feet from the congregation during worship, will not be required to wear masks while at the front of worship.
- **Symptoms:** If a person is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they should not attend an outdoor worship service:
  - o Fever over 100 degrees
  - o Cough
  - o Shortness of breath
  - o Chills

o Loss of taste or smell

• Seating: Families will be seated together in areas separated from other worshipers at a distance of least 6 feet from other families.

Chairs: All worshipers will bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on during the worship services.

Sharing the Peace: No-touch alternatives for sharing the peace will be provided.

Offering: No-touch alternatives for making offering will be provided.

Fellowship/Social Hour: No fellowship or social hour will be offered before and after the church service, In the spirit of loving our neighbor, all are encouraged to leave the premises upon conclusion of the church service.

Communion: Communion kits will be made available upon entering the north lawn on days of communion. Communion will be taken from your seat and communion kits will be disposed of when leaving the worship service.

Signs: St. Stephen Lutheran Church will post signs at the outdoor worship services listing worship protocols.

Respiratory Etiquette: All worshipers will cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.

Restrooms: Restrooms on the north end of the building and in the nursery will be open immediately before, during and after outdoor services. People may use the restroom during that time, as needed. The floors will be marked for distancing, we ask the one family use the restroom at a time and families with young children use the nursery bathroom (nursery use not allowed).

Handwashing: All are instructed to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available. Hand sanitizer will be available at stations throughout the grounds at outdoor worship services

Dismissal: The Pastor and ushers will dismiss families to allow for maximum distancing

Notification of possible outbreak: St. Stephen Lutheran Church will take a group photo of each outdoor service or ask members to sign in and ask that any guests fill out a contact card. This will allow us to notify church members and guests of a possible Covid-19 exposure. We will not share this information with any other entities.