



COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan
for
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
New Prague, MN

Developed by Risk Management Team: Kim Gassner, Paul Newton, Pastor Alicia Hilding

June 2020

Edited July 14, 2020

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Plan

Holy Trinity 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 by listening to the facts, feelings, and values of the faith community, broader community, and ministry partners. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Le Sueur & Scott Counties, Minnesota Department of Health (MDOH), World Health Organization (WHO), and the ELCA 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; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

This preparedness and response plan assume the following:

1. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will follow guidance from the MN Governor, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the ELCA.
2. Holy Trinity 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). Holy Trinity'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. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's ministries and activities will resume in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The COVID19 situation will evolve and Holy Trinity 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. 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.

6. Large gatherings are unlikely to be safe over the next several months. Worship services, and other large gatherings should be carried out online.
7. 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 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church facility.

COVID-19 Plan Management

The Risk Management Team is responsible for COVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan with support from the staff and church council. All staff in the facility will be provided with how to contact the Risk Management Team with any COVID-19 concerns. Email and phone contact information will be provided for our Risk Management Team Members from our main office as requested. 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.

Date contacted: 7.8.20 (most recently)

State and/or local public health official: Le Sueur County Public Health Director

Contact information: Cindy Shaughnessy (cshaughnessy@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

- The Risk Management Team are aware of and will follow all applicable regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Federal guidelines: Center for Disease Control (CDC)

State guidelines: Minnesota Department of Health (MDOH)

Local guidelines: Le Sueur County

Affiliation guidelines: Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA

- 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 every month by the Risk Management Team 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 Holy Trinity 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) can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Hand sanitizer is available at each of the main entrances (door 1 & 2) to the facility.

- A “Clean Your Hands!” poster is 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 (when the building is in full use).

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” poster is posted by each main entry.
- Tissues provided in common areas, with emphasis by door 1 & door 2.
- 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 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church may order them for staff.

Social distancing

Everyone entering the facility is asked to practice social distancing listening to 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

Holy Trinity 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 to work remotely.
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks. Equipment questions should be directed to an individual's supervisor.
- Flexible hours and staggered shifts are available to minimize the number of persons in the facility at one time. Please discuss with your 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 are required to 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 wipes are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed 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 break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms are rearranged to promote social distancing.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by Holy Trinity Lutheran Church staff in accordance with [CDC guidance](#). Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g. copy room, main office) and high-touch areas (e.g. door handles, railings).

- The church Custodian and their supervisor are provided training on proper cleaning (Resources: "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting" and "Cleaning and Disinfection Your Facility") as well as background information on COVID-19 (Resource: "Symptoms of Coronavirus") provided by the CDC.

- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, the Office Manager (supervisor of custodial staff) will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.
- The church Custodian will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, door handles, and handrails at least once daily (when building is in use), and more frequently if deemed necessary.

Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines, and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms. Screening protocols will be communicated via email and/or phone. All COVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff via email and/or phone with updates occurring as recommended practices and/or environment changes happen.

Holy Trinity 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 include:

- Vacation
- Sick Time
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Parental/Medical Leave
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Paid Sick Leave (Federal)

Questions on leave policies should be directed to the pastor(s) or the Executive Team.

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 their supervisor. Employees exhibiting symptoms should not come into the church.

- Take your temperature in the morning and when you return home from work. 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 (including exposure to those with COVID-19 positive individuals or symptoms), 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 exit their workspace as soon as possible and contact their supervisor.

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.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will work with Minnesota Department of Health to inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in our facility, and 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 member's health status and health information will be protected.

If a positive COVID-19 case arises in a staff member, church member, or visitor- the MDOH [What to do if an Employee has Covid-19](#) document procedure will be followed.

Communications and Training

This preparedness and response plan is communicated with all staff and church council via email and/or print. Training is available to staff and persons using the facility via email and/or print.

- Return to Work Training handout is provided to staff.
- Enhanced Cleaning handout is provided to cleaning staff.
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church visitor requirements & facility handouts are provided, when applicable.

Facility Use

Holy Trinity 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 meetings, 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 church/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 for space use will be reviewed by Risk Management.

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

- Review training provided by Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
- Share Holy Trinity 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 pastor(s) and/or Risk Management Team. While public health can be a resource, it is not Holy Trinity's responsibility to report a COVID-19 positive individual to the Department of Health, it is the healthcare provider's responsibility to report it to MDH as COVID-19 is a reportable disease.

Resources

Appendix B provides a list of resources to support the church's decisions and activities during the COVID19 pandemic.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Phases

The purpose of this phased approach is to provide guidance and direction for activities at the church. The disease progression is imperfectly known and there may be times where Holy Trinity Lutheran Church may need to move back and forth between phases. The timing for shifts from stage to stage will be informed by limitations and dates set by the Governor, the State Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control. This plan is subject to change.

Phase	Church Activities
Phase 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship online • Life celebrations (weddings/funerals/baptisms) postponed • Faith formation online • Ministry events postponed • Building closed • Staff telework • Community groups/gatherings postponed
Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship online • Recording possibility in the sanctuary but limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 feet of space between people. • Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) postponed or held private/outdoors with social distancing & PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)/recognized online • Faith formation online • Ministry events online/postponed • Building closed • Staff telework, only in the building for necessity • Visitation via phone/writing • Community groups/gatherings online/postponed

<p>Phase 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship online &/or consider outdoor options with social distancing & PPE • Recording possibility in the sanctuary but limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 feet of space between people. • Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) postponed or held private/outdoors with social distancing & PPE /recognized online *10 or less recommended. • Faith formation online &/or consider outdoor options with permission (with social distancing & PPE) *10 or less recommended. • Ministry events online/postponed • Staff encouraged to telework, but can work with permission/staggered hours/social distancing & PPE • Visitation via phone/writing &/or outdoor options considered with social distancing & PPE • Community groups/small groups online &/or consider outdoor options with permission (with social distancing & PPE) *10 or less recommended.
<p>Phase 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship in-person (live-streaming) with social distancing & public health practices implemented per local guidance (e.g. masks) • Entrance and exit into the church will be designed to avoid gathering. • All worship practices evaluated based on recommendations by ELCA • Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) held private with social distancing & PPE/recognized online • Faith formation online/In-person w/social distancing & PPE (age-appropriate) • Ministry events online/In-person w/social distancing & PPE • Office/Building staff in the building, remaining staff can telework/work in the building with permission/staggered hours/social distancing & PPE • Visitation via phone/writing/outdoors &/or in-person considered (with social distancing & PPE) • Community groups/small groups In-Person with permission (with social distancing & PPE)
<p>Phase 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business as normal (although we recognize this new normal may be different)

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Phase Chart

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Worship Services	Online	Online	Online/Outdoor Options with Social Distancing & PPE	In-Person with Social Distancing & PPE	New Normal
Weddings/ Funerals/ Baptisms	Postponed	Online/Private Outdoors with Social Distancing & PPE	Online/Private Outdoors with Social Distancing & PPE	Online/Private with Social Distancing & PPE	New Normal
Students	Online	Online	Online/Outdoor Options with Social Distancing & PPE	In-person with Social Distancing & PPE	New Normal
Ministry Events	Postponed	Online/Postponed	Online/Postponed	Online/In-person with Social Distancing & PPE	New Normal
Staff	Remote/Building Closed/Telework	Remote/Building Closed/Telework	In-Person with permission/staggered hours/Telework	In-person with permission/staggered hours/Telework	New Normal
Community Groups/ Gatherings	Postponed	Postponed/Online	Postponed/Online/ Outdoor Options with Social Distancing & PPE	In-Person with permission with Social Distancing & PPE	New Normal

Appendix A – Request for Facility Use

Request for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Use

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's 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 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.

Decisions for facility use will be based on phases of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church preparedness and response plan. To facilitate approval for use of our 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 and why it must be done on-site or at another location away from your home.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will provide guidance for use of the facility. Describe the precautions you will take to ensure your health and safety and the health and safety of those who will participate in the gathering. (methods and means for social distancing, PPE, etc.)

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

General

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

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

County/State

<https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=44>

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