

Plans for Resuming In-person Worship at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

Starting on May 27th in-person worship services were able to be resumed in Minnesota. Below is our plan for how we will resume worship services. Leadership will continue to update this plan as necessary, as this is an ever-changing situation. In this process, we took a concerted effort to make worship and our facility as safe as possible because we know it is a concern that our members have. Please remember the changes that are being made to follow guidelines are temporary. Lord-willing we will be able to worship with fewer precautions soon.

Far more important than the guidelines, however, are our Christian attitudes as we resume worship. We know that there are many personal preferences and strong feelings on all sides of this issue. Now, more than ever, we need to show patient, flexible, Christian love to each other. Not everyone will be entirely satisfied with this plan. It is impossible to make a plan everyone agrees with regarding our COVID-19 response. As Christians, we are called to “in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others”. (Philippians 2:3,4) We all care about worshipping, sharing Christ, our neighbors, and our personal freedoms. For a time, our personal freedoms may not be exercised how we wish they could be for the sake of the health of the people around us, godly compliance to the government, consideration of other’s feelings, and the perception of the church in the community. With that in mind, I pray that whenever we get to the end of this people will say of us, “They are obviously Christian friends. Jesus unites them and nothing else divides them.” God be with you all, as we lovingly come together in-person!

General Information

- Sunday services will be held at 9:00 a.m. and Wednesday evening services will continue to be at 7:00 p.m.
- Due to the statewide mandate starting on July 25th masks or face coverings will be required for worshipping at church. If you have a health condition that would prevent you from wearing a face covering, you will not have to wear one. Also, children ages 5 and under will not be required to wear one.
- Online worship will continue even after all gathering restrictions have been lifted. Printed sermons will also be mailed to those without internet access.

Worship Expectations

- We will have all pews open for seating; however, we ask that there be 6 feet of social distance between family units. If needed, ushers will help you/your family locate a place to sit.
- The hymnals will be in the pews but everything needed for worship will be printed in the worship folder.
- For the children’s message, we ask children to remain seated with their parents while pastor speaks up front.
- Offering plates will not be passed but will be at the back of the church where members can leave their offering (you can also give online at duluth-lutheran.com).

Holy Communion:

- The Lord’s Supper will be offered in a modified manner; multiple family units will come forward to receive communion while maintaining spacing with one another. Individuals, couples, or families will be directed by the usher to enter from the side aisle to join the table and receive the Lord’s Supper. After receiving the Lord’s Supper, you will exit out the center aisle and return to your seat. The wine will be offered in plastic cups that will be disposed in a basket by the center aisle.
- Holy Communion will continue to be offered in service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.
- For those who feel more comfortable to receive the Lord’s Supper in a private setting, pastor is offering private communion for members.

Before and After Worship

- Whether you are inside or outside the church building, please be mindful of maintaining 6 feet of spacing between yourself and others.
- Both the front and back doors will be open when arriving for the service.
- Pastor, ushers, and elders will be present in the entryway to provide any guidance.

Cleanliness

- Volunteer cleaning crews we will be disinfecting the pews and surfaces after each service.
- Church cleaning and custodial cleaning will be done during the week to maintain the building's cleanliness prior to worship services.
- Hand sanitizer will available in multiple locations in the building.

Encouragements

- Make worship decisions based on your own comfort level. If you are uncomfortable attending worship at this time we encourage you to worship online at home.
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. If you have any of these symptoms or have been exposed to people who have, you and your family should stay at home and worship online.
- Those at high risk of serious illness or in the at-risk category are encouraged to stay home.
- Continue to follow healthy hygiene practices: wash hands frequently, avoid touching face and mouth, cough and sneeze into a tissue or inside of elbow.

Approved by Church Council on June 1st, 2020. This document will be updated with changes as needed.