

St Martin's Lutheran Church Reopening Plan -- Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, St. Martin's assembled a task force to collect recommendations and serve in an advisory capacity to Council in order to help keep our congregation and community as safe as possible. The guidelines below have been created based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, our local health department and government, synodical statements, and information from our insurance carrier. We have developed a phased approach for returning to worship, school, and other activities in our church spaces, while making the health and safety of our church community our highest priority.

The following three phase plan will guide us in our work and worship in the months ahead. As the prevalence of coronavirus cases in the county waxes and wanes, we may need to move back and forth between the specific phases described below:

Phase One: No In-Person Gatherings -- Most staff is teleworking, with only essential personnel present, who are adhering to safety parameters on site. Only essential functions will occur on the church property, such as recording of worship, Meals on Wheels, and deep cleaning of facilities.

Pastoral care, Bible studies, and other aspects of congregational life will be provided remotely via technological options during this phase.

Phase Two: Limited Gatherings -- Church offices will be open with limited hours, and telework will still be allowed as possible. Outdoor communion services, small committee/group meetings (with physical distancing), and small indoor worship services will be allowed at significantly reduced capacity.

Singing together and speaking in unison, even from a distance, are traditional worship service practices that are risky during the coronavirus, due to the spread of aerosolized particles and droplets that are projected with singing and responsive speaking. Therefore, worship participants will be required to wear masks and maintain 6 foot physical distance from one another, worshippers will not speak/sing during the service, there will be no Eucharist, no passing of the peace or offering plate, no fellowship hour, and no access to other areas of building except restrooms. *Of note, continued utilization of online worship is strongly recommended for anyone in a vulnerable demographic (65+, pre-existing health conditions, immunocompromised, etc).* We highly encourage ongoing use of technological means for worship, pastoral care, Bible study, and group gatherings.

Phase Three: Further relaxation of Phase 2, gradually allowing increased number of persons involved in the activities above. Exact parameters for attendance at worship will be guided by recommendations from local health and governmental authorities. Online worship opportunities will continue, even after in-person worship resumes.

Summary of Modifications to Worship to allow Re-opening:

- Physical distancing requirements will limit capacity in the sanctuary (estimated at 40 people initially), so it will be important for folks to sign-up when they plan to attend worship. This will be done by utilizing an online tool such as Sign-Up Genius, and a link will be regularly included in weekly congregational E-blasts.
- Signs will be posted on doors discouraging entry to anyone who feels ill, has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, or those who are more vulnerable due to age and/or underlying health problems.
- Any person with a temperature above 99.4°F with a non-contact infra-red thermometer (or 100.4°F with a contact thermometer,) or exhibits other symptoms of illness, not associated with allergies, including fever, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, difficulty breathing, a new loss of taste or smell, the need for

routine nebulizer treatments, fatigue, headache, or a rash should stay home to self-isolate, recover, and recuperate.

- Signs will be posted requiring mandatory mask use by everyone age 3 and over. Those unwilling to don a mask will not be allowed into the church.
- Signs and markers helping to guide physical distancing will be appropriately placed on the floor and pews to ensure safety.
- The only church spaces accessible to those attending worship will be the narthex (for pass-through only), the sanctuary, the hallway leading to the restrooms (for pass-through only), and the restrooms. Of note, restroom use will be limited to one person at a time, and the drinking fountains will not be available. Masks will be required at all times when in the building.
- Access to worship will only be through the narthex doors. Passcode access at other entry points will be disabled, and signs will be posted on other doors to direct people to the narthex to enable proper intake and infection control considerations.
- A cadre of volunteers will welcome and help with intake of worshippers (eg- temperature taking, sign-ins for contact tracking, administration of health questionnaires, and provision of instructions on safety and distancing). Ushers will escort worshippers to their seats so as to maintain social distancing in the pews. Worshippers will sit in every third pew in the sanctuary.
- As the sanctuary reaches capacity, overflow will be available in the fellowship wing.
- Within the sanctuary all touchable items (eg- hymnals, bulletins, Bibles, visitor cards, kids table/bags etc.) will be removed. The pastor will direct the order for worship.
- Children will need to stay with their families throughout the service, and should not be left unattended.
- The pastor will not stand at the rear door of the sanctuary to greet worshippers. However, when the weather permits he will stand outside and happily greet congregants from safe social distance.
- Within worship the pastor, organist, and singers will enter from the side and remain distant from each other and the congregants to lead worship. While appropriately distanced during worship, they will not be masked.
- Except for designated worship leaders (eg- pastor, musicians) there will be no responsorial speaking, singing, passing of peace, Eucharist, offering, etc. during the worship service.
- An offering plate will be placed at the entrance to the sanctuary so folks can share their gifts in a touchless manner.
- There will be no fellowship time inside the building before or after worship. Should worshippers decide to visit with one another outdoors, they should do so at safe physical distance per health department guidelines.
- The sanctuary will be deep cleaned after worship.

******St. Martin's day school** plans to open on September 8th, and will observe requirements for facial coverings, physical distancing, and infection control as established in the re-opening plan approved by this Task Force, the School Board of Directors, and the Church Council. The plan was crafted with great sensitivity to the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and the Maryland Health Department, and will be adjusted as necessary. The Head of School and School Nurse will continue to carefully guide operations and remain in close contact with the Task Force.

****To ensure the safest and most successful phased re-opening of school and church, the following **supplies** have been purchased and set throughout the facilities: 12 touchless hand sanitizing stations, 29 touchless soap dispensers, 2 infrared thermometers, extra masks for those who have forgotten them but wish to enter the building, appropriate social distancing/mask wearing signage.