



**COVID-19 Preparedness Plan  
for Light of Christ Lutheran Church  
Delano, MN**

**March 16, 2021 Revision**

## Introduction

In late May, the Governor issued an Executive Order which permitted congregations to begin meeting again for in-person gatherings. Before opening up for in-person gatherings, however, every congregation has been required to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The Preparedness Plan is required to meet all of the protocols laid out by the Minnesota Department of Health in the documents titled *Industry Guidance for Safely Reopening: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, Weddings, and Funerals* and *Guidance for Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies*.

The leadership of Light of Christ has spent the past two months developing and implementing our Preparedness Plan. In June, the Church Council appointed a Wellness Task Force made up of seven healthcare professionals in our congregation: Luke Borman, Kelly Harstad, Ben Nielsen, Britta Reiersen, Barb Russell, Stacy VanCura, and Heidi Wuerger. They assessed every element of the Preparedness Plan in order to mitigate the risk of transmitting the coronavirus as much as possible. The Task Force will continue to function in that capacity as we move forward. The Task Force then presented their recommendations to the Church Council in July and the Council adopted their recommendations with minor revisions.

Several guiding principles have informed the development of our Preparedness Plan. The first is that we will strive to provide as safe and as healthy an environment as possible for all staff, church members, church visitors and organizations with permission to use the Light of Christ Church building. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our facility and throughout our community. Through a cooperative effort by the Light of Christ community, we are seeking to maintain the safety and health of everyone with access to Light of Christ building and church grounds.

A second guiding principle is that we will follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Governor for faith-based communities.

A third guiding principle is that the Church Council is making the final decisions about the formation and the implementation of the Preparedness Plan. This is also true as we move forward in the months ahead. Because of the nature of the virus, we find ourselves in a fluid, dynamic situation and so the policies and protocols outlined in the Preparedness Plan may need to be revised as we adapt to changing circumstances. Our current Church Council is made up of the follow members: Wes Aylsworth; Carmen Hanson; Jennifer Hinker; Jon Holzer; Derek Horeis; Elizabeth Kohlhoff (Vice President); Tom Sebelien (Treasurer); Lisa Spencer; Stacy VanCura (President); and Bruce Kuenzel (Pastor).

We are also required to have a Preparedness Plan administrator and the Church Council has appointed Jinnelle Weis, our Shared Ministry Director, to serve in that capacity.

## **Staff Protections and Protocols Hygiene and Physical Distancing**

- Light of Christ will maximize remote-working – staff members who are able to work from home must work from home. Only work-related tasks required to be completed within the facility will be deemed allowable for on-site entry. Reduced church office hours will be clearly posted.
- When multiple staff members have work-related tasks requiring on-site attendance, shifts must be staggered to allow for 6 feet physical distancing.
- Physical distancing must be accommodated in all work areas, breakrooms, rest rooms and common areas.
- Staff members are required to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and must be symptom free prior to entering the church building. Symptoms may include, but not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste or smell or gastrointestinal symptoms.
- If a staff member experiences symptoms during the workday while in the building, he or she is expected to leave the building immediately.
- If a staff member suspects he or she has been exposed to COVID-19 or are confirmed ill, he or she will be required to self-quarantine in accordance with CDC recommendations prior to returning to in-office work.
- If a staff member is confirmed with COVID-19 and/or suspects contact with a person confirmed with COVID-19 it must be reported to the Light of Christ Pastor and all other staff members must be notified of potential exposure as promptly as reasonably plausible. Notice should also be given to all other known contacts as can be reasonably tracked.
- When working on-site, staff members are required to wear a mask and follow hand washing protocol in accordance with CDC recommendations. Light of Christ will ensure that necessary handwashing and/or hand sanitizing facilities are appropriately stocked.
- Physical distancing and masking also applies to all visitors entering the building for the purpose of staff interaction.
- Staff meetings must comply with CDC recommendations limiting to 15 persons or less.
- Light of Christ will provide paid time off for all COVID-19 related illnesses that require staff to be away for work. Staff members will not be required to take Paid

Time Off or a leave of absence if scheduled to work after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Light of Christ will continue to pay standard hourly rate/salary for regularly scheduled hours until the affected staff member is cleared by his or her primary care provider to return to work.

- Pastor Kuenzel is responsible for implementation and compliance.
- Adopted by the Church Council on July 21, 2020.



## **Building and Ventilation Protocols**

Peter Grant and Aaron Amdor, the co-chairs of the Property Committee, met with two representatives of Comfort Matters to discuss our HVAC system and how we might improve fresh air ventilation throughout the building. Comfort Matters will give us a proposal by August 1<sup>st</sup> which will include baseline data, recommendations for future HVAC, and associated pricing.



## Drop-off, Pick-up and Delivery Practices

- Deliveries are received through the Light of Christ fellowship/office door and are to be left in the youth office adjacent to the youth room and directly east of the building entrance.
- Staff members and delivery personnel should avoid direct contact and maintain physical distance of 6 feet when verifying receipt of delivery.
- Efforts should be taken to minimize sharing scanners or pens – use electronic means of verification whenever possible.
- Deliveries should remain untouched for several hours (preferably 24 hours if time allows) and sprayed with disinfectant prior to handling. All outer packaging materials should be properly disposed of immediately after opening.
- Staff members should wash or disinfect hands thoroughly after handling deliveries and disinfect any high-touch surfaces that were contacted.
- Light of Christ Office Manager has primary responsibility for implementation and compliance. All staff members accepting a delivery must comply with this delivery protocol.
- Approved by the Church Council – July 21, 2020.



## Work/Gathering Space Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

- Light of Christ will, to the best of its ability, comply with CDC's guidance for reopening buildings following prolonged shut-down or reduced operations. This may include, but not limited to, the following:
  - Review of all utility systems within the building to ensure safe operational status (this may include ventilation, water-supply, sewer, gas, vermin, molds, mildew, HVAC systems, etc.). Established protocols should be followed for re-starting of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other systems as necessary.
  - The services of an outside, professional disinfectant company may be considered for overall cleaning prior to allowing public use.
  - Considerations may include but are not limited to:
    - No touch entry to multi-stall bathrooms or installation of trash receptable and disinfectant wipes by all doors.
    - Disabling of community drinking stations and water fountains.
    - Not allowing any public food or drink service.
    - Providing adequate tissues, disinfectant wipes, etc. and no-touch disposable receptacles readily available through-out the building.
- \* The Light of Christ Property Committee is responsible for implementation and compliance.
- \* Adopted by the Church Council on July 21, 2020.



Breezeway – Narthex – Sanctuary – Sacristan – Children’s Room –  
Men’s and Women’s Restroom Cleaning Protocol

### Janitorial Service Checklist

Checkmark to note complete:

	Before the event begins and weather permitting, open windows or doors to allow for increased air flow
	Remind / confirm with signage at entrance that attendees have not exhibited illness symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 illness in the last 14 days
	Wipe down exterior and interior door handles at the entry
	Wipe down COVID-19 supply table
	Check inventory of COVID-19 supplies at front entry table: -Masks -Hand sanitizer -Meeting checklist -Tissues -Spray sanitizer -Paper towels **Replace as needed**
	Sanitize pews
	Clean and sanitize pastor area in the front of sanctuary -Chairs -Altar
	Clean and sanitize Sacristan area: -Clean counter-top area -Sanitize counter-top area -Clean sink and faucet -Sanitize sink and faucet -Clean door handle inside and out -Sanitize door handle inside and out -Wipe down bell handle and case with sanitizer -Clean fridge door handle -Sanitize fridge door handle
	Clean and sanitize seating areas in Narthex -Hard benches wipe down -Sanitize -Fabric chairs wipe down arms -Sanitize
	Clean and sanitize children’s room -Clean counter-top area -Sanitize counter-top area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Clean sink and faucet</li><li>-Sanitize sink and faucet</li><li>-Clean door handle inside and out</li><li>-Sanitize door handle inside and out</li></ul>
	Bathrooms – normal protocol – <b>PLUS</b> sanitize all touch areas





## **Communications & Training Practices and Protocols**

- All Light of Christ staff members and leadership must be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure. Training must be completed prior to re-establishing normal on-site working hours.
- All Light of Christ staff members and leadership has personal responsibility to review, comply with and follow all church established COVID-19 policies, procedures, practices, and protocols.
- The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Light of Christ Lutheran Church is posted in the office area entry way between the Youth Room Office and the Banner Storage Room and in the Narthex directly in front of the Sanctuary doors. This plan is to be shared, reviewed, and complied with by all staff members.
- All COVID-19 policies, procedures, practices, and protocols must be posted and communicated to all members and all persons/organizations with approval to use the church facility. Light of Christ staff and leadership has the responsibility to enforce all provisions and the Church Council reserves the right to discontinue building use for any person/organization in violation of COVID-19 policies and procedures.
- Communication to all Light of Christ members and to all persons/organization authorized to use the church facility should include the steps being taken for protection to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Communication is required prior to, and at the start of, any event or gathering and should include informing them of their role in protecting themselves and others.
- The Light of Christ Office Manager and the Shared Ministry Coordinator share primary responsibility for communication and monitoring compliance.
- Adopted by the Church Council on July 21, 2020.



# Protocols to Minimize Possible Transmissions

## Entry into the Building

- Light of Christ will clearly post the requirement of all persons entering the building to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and be symptom-free prior to entering the church building for any purpose: symptoms may include, but not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste or smell or gastrointestinal symptoms.
- **Anyone feeling ill, having direct contact with anyone with COVID-19, or exhibiting any symptoms should NOT enter the building.**
- All entrants must practice good hygienic procedures, including frequent hand washing and use of sanitizer:
  - Masks are required for all persons over the age of 5; encouraged for children between the ages of 3-5; and not required for children 2 years old and younger.
  - Entrants are asked to cleanse hands with sanitizer upon entry.
  - Entrants are asked to effectively cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing to minimize the spread of respiratory droplets.
- All entrants must maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from one another.
- Any person, once in the building, that experiences new symptoms will be asked to immediately leave the building.
- In the event that a person experiencing symptoms can not immediately leave the building, a Light of Christ leader will escort the person to the small office adjacent to the youth room until such time as they are able to safely vacate the building.
- Completion of a screening survey for all visitors may be required prior to access to the building. The survey may require declaration of contact with exposed persons and confirmed cases, out of continent travel. etc.
- All persons who may be at a higher risk and/or compromised in any way are encouraged to remain home.
- The use of all office equipment is limited to staff members and volunteers where use is required to complete mandatory tasks. Any person using resource room office equipment -- e.g. copy machine, staplers, paper cutter, glue sticks, etc. -- must wipe down everything with disinfectant wipes when project is completed.

- All small group gatherings and ceremonies must be scheduled through the church office to ensure COVID-19 protocols are communicated and to ensure ample time for cleaning between gatherings.
- Persons participating in a small group gathering or ceremony that are diagnosed with COVID-19 following their attendance should notify the Light of Christ Pastor and follow quarantine protocols per MDH guidelines.



## Worship Services



All persons entering Light of Christ to attend a scheduled worship service must comply with all guidelines listed regarding the Entry into the Building section of the Plan, as well as the following guidelines:

- An electronic sign-up schedule will be available online and any person planning to attend a Sunday worship must pre-register for a specific date. Attendees must pre-select their pew seat as required on online registration. The maximum number of persons allowed in the Sanctuary on any given Sunday will be 75.
- All attendees must adhere to physical distancing of 6 feet – immediate family members may share pews – masks required for persons over the age of 5, encouraged for children between 2-5, and not required for children under 2 years of age.
- Physical greetings are not permitted (use only peace signs, waves, air fist pumps, etc.).
- Public singing and group speaking are not permitted during worship service.
- All Light of Christ pens, hymnals, friendship pads, youth activity bags, loose pew informational materials, etc. are removed and not available for use in the Sanctuary.

- No printed materials will be used during worship service – all information will be displayed on video screen. Exceptions may be allowed with approval from Light of Christ Pastor.
- Offering plates will be placed in the back of the Sanctuary and available for persons to deposit offerings as they enter or leave the Sanctuary. No offering plates will be passed during worship services.
- Individual Communion packets will be available to pick up as persons wishing to participate in Holy Communion enter the Sanctuary. The Holy Communion liturgy during worship will provide time for each individual to commune without moving from pew to altar.
- Following worship service attendees must exit church promptly and orderly while maintaining required physical distancing.
- \* Pastor Kuenzel and Katie Kohler, the Light of Christ Worship and Music Director, are responsible for implementation and compliance.
- \* Adopted by the Church Council on July 21, 2020.

## **Baptism, Wedding, and Funeral Protocols**

- Attendees will be capped at a maximum number of 75 people.
- Doors to the sanctuary will be propped open and windows will be opened as weather allows.
- All pens, hymnals, and loose materials will be removed from the pews.
- No printed materials: all information will be displayed on screen.
- Masks are required by attendees older than 5 years of age, encouraged for children between 2-5 years old, and not required for children under 2 years of age.
- No attendee should exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 including, but not limited to a cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.
- \* The Pastor will wear gloves while performing baptismal duties.
- \* The Pastor can briefly get closer than 6 ft to parent and baby while performing the baptism.

- Hand sanitizer and masks will be provided by Light of Christ.
- Attendees will not engage in activities at high risk for expelling respiratory droplets such as singing or group speaking.
- All attendees must exit the church promptly and orderly while maintaining social distancing after the ceremony.
- LOC will clean all surfaces with sanitizer wipes at the close of the service and clean the area according to COVID-19 sanitation procedures posted or documented.
- The Pastor and the Worship and Music Director are responsible for implementation and compliance.
- Adopted by the Church Council on July 21, 2020.



Please review and complete the below checklist of responsibilities. Light of Christ reserves the right to ask any individual to leave if policies/meeting procedures are not followed. A sign-up sheet listing the names and phone numbers of all attendees is attached as an addendum to this checklist. This is intended as assistance for contract tracing should that become necessary.

	Before the ceremony begins and weather permitting, open windows or doors to allow for increased air flow
	Remind/confirm no ceremony attendees exhibited illness symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 illness in the last 14 days
	Confirm all attendees over 5 years of age are wearing masks and encourage masks for children 2 to 5 years of age; if anyone forgot to bring a mask, instruct them to obtain one from the table at the entrance
	Confirm size of group is less than 75 people
	Names and phone numbers of ALL ceremony attendees is attached as an addendum to this checklist.
	Document any rooms used for ceremony.
	Clean all surfaces with sanitizer wipes at the close of the ceremony.
	Document which spaces or other areas were used (e.g.– restrooms) to ensure janitorial service.
	Close and lock any windows or doors which are open
	Complete checklist and leave in Light of Christ Office Manager mailbox (Terri Reuter)

## Protocols for Small Group Gatherings



- A maximum of 15 people per large room indoors, and a maximum of 60 people for outdoor gatherings. The gathering leader reserves the right to ask an individual to leave if policies/meeting procedures are not followed. (Maximum of 60 people for outdoor gatherings does not apply to outdoor worship services).
- All indoor gatherings will take place in the Light of Christ Fellowship Hall or Narthex; if there are more than 15 people in a group, they must split into different meeting areas allowing for proper physical distance.
  - There is no use of couches or cloth covered chairs.
  - Non-physical greetings are used (peace signs, waves, air fist bumps).
  - If weather allows, the windows or doors will be opened to increase ventilation; the gathering leader is responsible for ensuring building security is restored at the close of the meeting.
  - The gathering leader will complete a verbal screen of meeting attendees to confirm no one is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or has been in contact with anyone experiencing symptoms.
  - Masks are required by attendees over 5 years of age, encouraged for children between 2-5 years of age, and not required for children under 2 years of age. However, no attendee should exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 including, but not limited to a cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat,



nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. (Masks are not required if a meeting is held outdoors with exception of outdoor worship which does require wearing of masks).

- Attendees will not engage in activities at high risk for expelling respiratory droplets such as singing.
- Names of all meeting attendees will be recorded and submitted to Light of Christ Office Manager (Terri Reuter).
- Gathering attendees should pack in, pack out – this means bringing your own materials, beverages, etc.
  - No use of kitchen and no food allowed.
  - Drinking fountains will not be in service.
  - Materials or printouts are single, individual use only, no shared materials.
- Attendees are required to clean all surfaces with sanitizer wipes at the close of the gathering and clean the area according to COVID-19 sanitation procedures posted or documented.
- The completed small group gathering checklist with names must be left in Light of Christ Office Manager's (Terri Reuter) church mailbox.
- Light of Christ Office Manager may approve use of Light of Christ facility for Small Groups that are governed by a protocol plan that is compliant with all Light of Christ requirements and protocol (e.g. Girl Scouts, Head Start).



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	Document any rooms used for meeting:
	Ask meeting attendees to throw away any trash or meeting materials they will not be taking home with them
	Clean all surfaces with sanitizer wipes at the close of the meeting
	Document which meeting spaces or other areas were used (ex – restrooms) to ensure janitorial service
	Close and lock any windows or doors which are open
	Complete checklist and leave in LOC Office Manager mailbox (Terri Reuter)


