

COVID-19 Prevention and Mitigation Our Saviour's and Grace Lutheran Churches, Whitehall, WI

Out of an abundance of care and concern for the health and well-being of the our community, this document has been created to guide Our Saviour's and Grace Lutheran Churches in the implementation of best practices during the current outbreak of the Coronavirus strain known as COVID-19. *It is important to note that these changes are only temporary* and are being utilized in order to reduce the risk of transmission and protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

If you are in the CDC's "higher risk" category we understand if you feel the need to stay home during this time. Please let us know how we can best support you. If you or someone you know is sick, please let the Pastor or church office staff know. Please don't visit the sick yourself.

Stage 1 Protocol

Worship

1. Peace: Please simply bow or nod to your neighbor as a sign of peace..
2. Offering: Offering plates will not be passed. They will be placed at the door or on stands that people will pass on their way to communion. Anyone handling the plates or what's contained in them (counters and whomever sets the plates out) will need to follow hand-washing protocols.
3. Greeting: The Pastor will not be shaking hands after worship. Members are encouraged to refrain from handshaking and other physical contact at this time.
4. Worship Materials: Throw away bulletins after using. Refrain from using the hymnals If you must use a hymnal, be sure to follow proper hand washing protocols after use.
5. Baptismal Font: If there is a baptism, the font will be sanitized and filled, used for the baptism, and following worship will be drained and sanitized..
6. Everyone assisting with Holy Communion will wash their hands with soap and water immediately before the worship service, use hand sanitizer just before communion and wear nitrile gloves during distribution.
7. The communion rail will not be used. Church goers will be released by ushers to come forward , and go directly to the pastor/communion assistant with the bread/wafers.
8. Bread/wafers will be dropped into hands to eliminate physical contact. While it is the practice of Lutherans to always offer wine/grape juice at communion, we

believe that the body and blood of the crucified and risen Christ is truly present completely in both the bread and the wine. So receiving only one element is acceptable in special circumstances. During the COVID-19 outbreak we will only receive bread at communion. Wine/grape juice will not be distributed.

9. Those involved in the set up and/or clean up of communion should follow proper hand washing protocols and use the nitrile gloves provided in the sacristy.

Food and Drink

1. No food or drink will be served before, during, or after worship. This includes, but is not limited to: coffee, donuts, cookies, and other treats.

2. Water fountains will be sealed and covered to discourage use.

3. Potlucks and Lenten meals are temporarily suspended.

Events, Activities and Social Distancing

1. Committees, teams and groups are trusted to make decisions about their meetings that fit their needs and comfort level. Please make sure that changes to meetings, especially cancellations, are quickly communicated to the Pastor and office staff, in addition to the members.

2. Those who conduct other programs such as Bible studies, choir rehearsals, and other small groups that meet at the church should make decisions with their groups that best fit the needs and comfort level of the group members. All groups should immediately inform the Pastor and church staff of cancellations. Please note that the Church Councils reserve the right to cancel events at anytime.

3. Please consider utilizing programs like Zoom, Facebook messenger, and Face Time to still have meetings even if you choose not to meet in person.

4. The pastor may at his discretion delay regular homebound visits, but will make every prudent effort to visit persons experiencing health emergencies.

Stage 2 Protocols

Cancellation Protocol

1. In general, the cancellation of church events and activities, including worship, will be made under the guidance of the CDC and/or the health department. Recommendations from other sources will be considered by the Our Saviour's and Grace Councils.

2.If, at any point, the congregation needs to cancel worship, we will communicate this information as quickly as possible via email, social media, and the church website.

3. Please continue to give an offering during the COVID-19 disruptions. When this is over, we still want to have a church. We support mission and ministry in the United States and the world through our giving in addition to providing salaries for staff and the upkeep of our facility. Offerings can be dropped off, mailed to the office, an electronic check can be sent from your bank, or consider signing up for *Simply Giving* online giving.

4. If possible, we should do our best to communicate with local television and radio stations about closing. Some members, without access to Internet, will need to be called.

5. If it becomes advisable that staff, including the pastor work from home, business will be conducted through phone calls, conference calls and email.

Digital Worship

1.The Pastor will plan to lead an abbreviated online worship service in the event that regular worship services are cancelled.

2.Online services will be available for viewing on the church Facebook page and may include scripture, prayer, a message and hymns that are in the public domain.

3.A print worship resource will be available via email and on the church website for those without access to Facebook.