

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN

BACK TO CHURCH

*PRACTICES FOR GATHERING IN A
SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER*



WHY

Gathering together is a fundamental part of Christian community, but care must be taken. Our Savior's and countless other congregations have had to use creativity and innovation to continue being church during this time of pandemic. The church never closed; it adapted in order to continue to proclaim the gospel and care for our neighbors. The need for flexibility and adaptation will continue.

As North Dakota begins the process of reopening, we too will consider the process of reopening Our Savior's in a careful and methodical manner so that we can care for those most vulnerable to COVID-19. In doing so we plan on reopening in three phases that parallel the Smart Restart Plan.

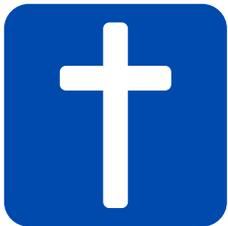


ABOUT THE PROCESS

In the regularly scheduled church council meeting on May 12, 2020 various documents were reviewed from the CDC, North Dakota Department of Health, the ELCA, as well as the Eastern North Dakota Synod.

The council appointed Pastor Tom Westcott and council member Kari Kempel to create a proposal for reopening Our Savior's to be reviewed by the group. All resources used for guidance come from the above listed sources.

PHASE ONE



WORSHIP

- Sit every other pew
- Remain 6 feet apart between family units/people who live in the same dwelling
- No physical contact (handshakes, hugs, etc.)
- Attendance will be limited to 50 people
- The projection screen will be used for all songs and readings (no bulletins or hymnals)
- Online worship will still be offered
- Outdoor worship or a drive in style of worship will be utilized occasionally
- Offering will be collected in a basket/bucket
- Congregational singing will be discouraged
- The use of masks is required.



BUILDING

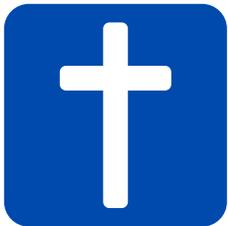
- Hand sanitizer is available at all entrances
- Sanctuary will be cleaned between each worship service
- Information regarding COVID 19 will be posted at every door
- Only the South, West, and East doors will be open in order to limit traffic patterns and areas to clean



OTHER GATHERINGS

- Fellowship Hall and gatherings closed through the summer of 2020
- Encourage vulnerable people to remain at home
- No in person pastoral visits
- No school or youth activities
- Staff should work from home as much as possible
- The use of masks is required

PHASE TWO



WORSHIP

- Sit every other pew
- Remain 6 feet apart between family units/people who live in the same dwelling
- No physical contact (handshakes, hugs, etc.)
- Attendance will be limited to 100 people
- The projection screen will be used for all songs and readings (no bulletins or hymnals)
- Online worship will still be offered
- Outdoor worship or a drive in style of worship will be utilized occasionally
- Offering will be collected in a basket/bucket
- Congregational singing will be discouraged
- The use of masks is strongly encouraged.



BUILDING

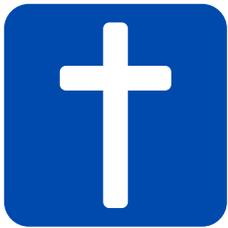
- Hand sanitizer is available at all entrances
- Sanctuary will be cleaned between each worship service
- Information regarding COVID 19 will be posted at every door
- Only the South, West, and East doors will be open in order to limit traffic patterns and areas to clean



OTHER GATHERINGS

- Fellowship Hall and gatherings closed through the summer of 2020
- Encourage vulnerable people to remain at home
- No in person pastoral visits
- Youth activities may resume with social distancing
- Staff should work from home as much as possible
- The use of masks is strongly encouraged

PHASE THREE



WORSHIP

- Limited social distancing
- Limit physical contact as much as possible
- No limit on attendance
- The projection screen will be used for all songs and readings (no bulletins or hymnals)
- Online worship will still be offered
- Offering will be collected in a basket/bucket



BUILDING

- Hand sanitizer is available at all entrances
- Sanctuary will be cleaned between each worship service
- Information regarding COVID 19 will be posted at every door
- Fellowship Hall and gatherings may reopen with limited social distancing



OTHER GATHERINGS

- Encourage vulnerable people to remain at home
- In person pastoral visits may resume with great care
- Youth activities may resume with limited social distancing
- Staff may work without restrictions
- The use of masks is strongly encouraged
- Any event involving food must follow health code for serving and preparation

COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATION

What future we will find ourselves in depends not only on the behavior of the virus, but on the actions of people - as individuals, churches, communities, and governments. The way forward will not be a matter of following a timetable, but of faithfully discerning the signs of the times, and responding accordingly. It has always been that way in the church!

Please understand that at least for the next year, we anticipate our lives being shaped by COVID-19. We face difficult choices between conflicting needs and imperatives. But we must avoid framing our situation in terms of a false choice between reviving the economy - or our churches - and saving lives. If we don't continue our efforts to contain the virus, a new wave of infections and deaths will cause further damage, and we will lose what we've gained from the measures we've already taken. And if we push the envelope too far by reopening our buildings and resuming gatherings prematurely, we may unfairly force on our more vulnerable members the choice between keeping themselves and others safe and participating in congregational life like everyone else.

With that said, the council of Our Savior's will diligently watch the recommendations from the ELCA, Eastern North Dakota Synod, CDC, and ND Department of Health for starting up our gatherings. As your elected leaders of the church, the council will decide when it is safe and responsible to enter into each phase of reopening the church. This document, or any revision of it, will be published in our current modes of communication (Salt Shaker, website, email).