

## **Bethlehem Lutheran Church Covid-19 Guidelines (August 20, 2021)**

### **General Procedures<sup>1,3</sup>**

- We ask that those positive with Covid-19 or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 refrain from in-person worship. Please join via live stream and we welcome you back as your health permits and/or as your health care professional guides.
- Attendees are encouraged to assess their conscience, personal health needs, and Christian love when determining masking. Attendees with masks are welcome.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building, and attendees will be encouraged to use it.
- Please consider very carefully how you will feel at church if there are more people than you expect or, for instance, if you see someone without a mask. We don't want people to feel offended or at risk at church. We will hold no ill will towards those who remain home and livestream as in past weeks.

### **Inside the Church Nave (a.k.a. 'Sanctuary')**

- Hymns, liturgy, and psalms will be printed in service folders.
- In order to maintain social distancing, visible markers / colored paper sheets will mark where members should NOT sit.
- Please understand that you may not get to sit where you usually sit.
- Overflow will take place in the kitchen area.
- Special care will be given to use disinfectant wipes to wipe down common surfaces each week, e.g., door handles used by attendees, light switches, bathroom fixtures, table surfaces, etc.
- Please avoid congregating in narrow spaces that may cause bottle necks. All doors between the sanctuary and narthex will be open at the end of service.

### **Holy Communion Procedures**

- Those who are setting up the elements for Holy Communion will wear a mask and gloves before preparing the elements – and when storing the elements and communion ware after worship.
- The 4 tables for Holy Communion will be limited to members of an immediate household or family
- We will invite by section to approach the sacrament. There's no rush, and no lines.
- The pastor will commune by inviting communicants to take and eat / drink from a distance. He will speak the words from a distance.
- Wafers will be in individual containers.
- For the foreseeable future, we will offer wine only by individual cup, separating the cups so that each communicant will only come into contact with the cup he or she is taking.
- Communicants who prefer to commune privately can arrange with Pastor Bode to do so. Pastor Bode will follow the same masking and sanitizing protocols described above.

## **Bible Class and Sunday School**

- Sunday school and adult Bible study will begin meeting in person starting August 8, 2021.
- Out of Christian love, we ask that parents and children follow the General Procedures as outlined above.
- Teachers and students will take precautions to keep >6 feet apart during class
- Teachers will clean the rooms after class with disinfectant
- Parents are invited to speak with our Sunday School Director to discuss a format that better suits your child(ren).

## **Close Contact Tracing<sup>2</sup>**

- If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and/or are awaiting test results, please follow guidance of your physician regarding treatment and quarantine.
- Contact tracing is being conducted by government agencies for those who test positive for Covid-19. Please follow the guidance of your health care provider.
- As a courtesy, we ask that you contact Pastor Bode if you have participated in an event in-person at church and since tested positive for Covid-19 within 48 h of the event. Please also consider contacting individuals who you had close contact with while at church (less than six feet distance and 15 cumulative minutes), so they are aware of potential exposure.

## **Notes**

1. Guidelines for Bethlehem's Covid-19 policy are based on Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Coronavirus Response Requirements ([coronavirus.in.gov](https://www.coronavirus.in.gov)).
2. Guidelines for Bethlehem's Close Contact Tracing are based on:
  - a. <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/contact-tracing/index.htm>
  - b. Personal communication with Hamilton County Health Educator, Jim Grinder.
3. Last but not least, guidelines for Bethlehem's Covid-19 guidelines depend fully on (and must never be taken independent of) the Word of God; namely, Scripture's truths about God's care for his creation, his power and willingness to heal, his preservation of our bodies and souls, consciences of the strong and weak, and Christian love.