

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Covid-19 Policy (January 2021)

General Procedures¹

- We ask that those with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been in recent contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 refrain from in-person worship. Please join via live stream
- Individuals age 65 and older and those with known high-risk medical conditions are encouraged suspend in-person worship and join via livestream.
- All attendees who are able are asked to wear a mask.
- Please greet one another from a distance; however, we must refrain from physical contact with fellow worshippers.
- All parishioners are encouraged to maintain social distancing of six feet at church, whether inside or outside, and especially when with others who are not member of your immediate household.
- 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.
- Service folders will be on seats, noticeably marking where we'd like individuals or families to be seated. In order to maintain social distancing, visible markers / colored paper sheets will mark where members should NOT sit. We will use alternating pews for seating during the service.
- Please understand that you may not get to sit where you usually sit.
- Overflow will take place in the kitchen area, with clearly marked entrances and exits.
- 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.
- At the end of our service, attendees will be dismissed from the back rows first, working our way forward, so as to maintain social distancing.
- Please avoid congregating in narrow spaces that may cause bottle necks

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 will not meet in person for the time being but will be available through online meetings.
- Bible study will be offered both in-person and online via Zoom meeting. It will be shorter for the sake of those traveling a distance.
- The fellowship hall and Sunday school rooms will remain closed to discourage the use of play equipment.

Close Contact

- We ask that those with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been in recent contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 refrain from in-person attendance.
- 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 contact 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. ² Please let Pastor know as well so that he can communicate with the congregation as needed (no names will be shared).
- If you are not comfortable contacting individuals, please contact Pastor Bode and he will contact these individuals in a confidential manner (no names or personal information shared) to inform them of potential exposure.
- We ask that you inform closes contacts or Pastor within 48 h of a positive test.
- Please follow your personal physicians' guidelines regarding treatment and quarantine.
- Note: contact tracing is being conducted by government agencies for those who test positive for Covid-19.

Communication

- For transparency, an email will be sent to the congregation in the event that someone has been at church and since tested positive for Covid-19 (no names). We will inform the congregation that all individuals who were in close contact with the infected individual(s) have been notified.

Notes

1. Guidelines for Bethlehem's Covid-19 policy are based on Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Coronavirus Response Requirements, Dec. 13 to Jan. 3 ([coronavirus.in.gov](https://www.coronavirus.in.gov)).
2. <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/contact-tracing/index.htm>