

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC guidelines and recommendations

## **PREPARING OUR CHURCH FOR “SAFER AT HOME”**

June 2020

*You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” – Psalm 91:1-2 (NRSV)*

# **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crossroad Lutheran Church guidelines and recommendations**

In this **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Church guidelines and recommendations**, you will find all the essential guidelines the Pastor, Church Council Members, administrative staff, all parishioners should follow during the coronavirus outbreak and temporary alterations of work from home policies.

## **Guidelines and recommendations brief & purpose.**

This COVID-19 Church guidelines and recommendations includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. You are kindly requested to follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe space for worship in this unique environment. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

This COVID-19 Church guidelines and recommendations is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines. If so, we will update you as soon as possible by email.

## **Scope.**

This COVID-19 Church guidelines and recommendations is an overall scope of guidelines for Council Members and the Pastor to prepare the Church property and ensure a safe environment to worship and to keep our parishioners (visitors) safe as well as our administrative staff. We strongly recommend you read through this action plan as well.

## **guidelines and recommendations Elements.**

This COVID-19 Church guidelines and recommendations outlines the required actions the Pastor, Council Members, Parishioners, visitors, and administrative staff should take to protect themselves from a potential coronavirus infection.

## **WHAT IS OUR ROLE?**

Our role as your church leaders and compassionate Christians, is to:

- Combat fear with knowledge to encourage preparedness and decrease stigma.
- Maintain operational continuity and continue expressions of Christian life in the case of quarantine and disruption.
- Show God's compassion and care to those in our communities who are affected.

## **BACKGROUND.**

Our first and most basic goal is to reduce the chance of people becoming sick or dying from an epidemic. We are community partners with public health and medical professionals, and this is caring for our flock as much as prayer and preaching. We are part of a community effort to save lives. We plan for our likely future.

- The best practice recommended by health professionals is to stay isolated in immediate family/household groups, and to minimize trips outside of the household for essentials.
- As a church and Christians, wherever we have the ability to aid in life-saving goals, we have a moral and ethical obligation to do so. This is about loving one's neighbor. We have other ways to provide the services we can provide, and to continue the essential operations of our church.

## **PASTORAL SERVICES.**

- Worship. All services, liturgies, etc. that our church is currently providing have been adapted to be offered from home, remotely using technology (prerecorded, live streamed, blast emails, church app, etc.).
- Education. All Christian education, where feasible, will be provided remotely.
- Pastoral Care, including care for those nearing death, and care for the grieving, where feasible, will be provided remotely.

## **CHURCH BUSINESS.**

- Work from Home. Until it is safe, all administrative staff will work from home when possible.
- Account Payables. Our church administrative assistant (practicing social distancing), and only if it is safe, will come into the church office to undertake those tasks which must be done on Church property.
- Church Mail: The Pastor or our church administrative assistant will check the mail as needed.
- Bill Payment Options: The bills are to be paid from the bank's check writing service as much as possible. This will limit the need of church officers (President, Treasurer) from having to come into the building and signing checks.
- Giving: Through church worship announcements, we have been encouraging as many of our givers as we can to give electronically.
- Personnel Risk and Sanitation: Administrative staff, Church Council Members are permitted in the building during this time. Each staff member, church council member will be cautious; will wear a face mask and sanitize before and after handling items in the church.

## **WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO RIGHT NOW?**

- **Discourage Building use.** Use the bathroom at home. Do not expect the church to be open for visits. We have locked down the administrative wing of the church from all use (visitors etc.) except by those working, Church Council Members, to administrate the church's needs.
- **Church Activities.** All Church activities are suspended for a significant period of time. No one (except church council members & administrative staff) are permitted in the building, at any time.
- **Community Services.** God's Garden, Lent Ministry, Coffee Ministry, or other direct services will resume/continue as the leader of each ministry sees fit. Feeding and caring for our surrounding community is a priority. Anyone entering church buildings, at any time, must wear a face mask; if handling food or anything of the like, must wear a face mask and gloves (mask/gloves are available in the kitchen (see drawer labels)).
- **Food.** There is to be no food in the refrigerator or stored in the kitchen. All food has been thrown out and new food will, likewise, be discarded.
- **DO NOT BRING FOOD INTO THE BUILDING.**
- **Church Directory.** Email a current church directory to Pastor, Council Members and to each Parishioner. Staying in touch with our church family should be a priority for all.

## **DEEP CLEAN THE CHURCH.**

- A cleaning company has been hired (COVID-19 knowledgeable) to deep clean the church.
- The chemicals and disinfectants utilized are those recommended by the CDC.
- Praise band is responsible for cleaning their own equipment, church band equipment and sound board area.
- Worship Director is responsible for cleaning altar, baptismal, vestments and paraments.
- We will inform members/visitors how our church was prepared via email and social media.

## **OUR BEST PRACTICES INCLUDE (but not limited to):**

- For now, we will provide a streamlined outdoor worship service, which remains the best option to mitigate potential exposure to coronavirus.
- We have rolled out a sign-up sheet via our Church app to sign up for each service you plan to attend. This will continue when we reconvene indoor worship services, as well.
- **IF YOU ARE SICK – STAY HOME!** This includes those who just had surgery. It is in your best interest to practice social distancing.
- Throughout the service, parishioners should maintain at least six feet between the person in front of you, behind you, and each side of you.
- Family parishioners and cohabitating individuals can sit together.
- We have added additional services to achieve at least six feet between parishioner groups. Fewer people at each worship service means more space for those who are in attendance.
- Worship Director (Susan Whitlatch) will train Worship Team volunteers to assist with worship services. We ask our team members to work with us and be the Kingdom of God!
- We ask that you refrain from using items touched by multiple people unless you can sanitize after each use (e.g. bulletins, offering plates will not be utilized until it is safe).
- Offerings: We strongly encourage you to consider giving via our Church Tithe.ly app, or via U.S. Mail.
- Nursery, Sunday School classes are suspended for the foreseeable future.

- Medically fragile and elderly Parishioners should continue to shelter in place and utilize remote services instead of in-person services.
- Our Praise Band are continuing to practice indoors while maintaining social distance requirements. They will wear masks while indoors.
- We are going to promote not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings. And promote the hashtag #itsoktosmileandwave.
- As a congregation, we all should be mindful of health needs and issues and prepare for a “non-touch experience.”

### **SERVICE TIMES AND LOCATION.**

- We will publish service times/locations via our church app, Face Book and our church website ([www.crossroadlutheran.com](http://www.crossroadlutheran.com)).
- To maintain social distancing mandated order, we will provide three (3) morning worship services at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00.
- Outdoor services will be provided on northside of parking lot (vacant lot by God’s Garden). You will have the option to stay in your car or bring a chair/blanket. Our Praise Band will be set up closet to our adjacent neighbor.
- We will continue to live stream our worship services and provide via YouTube.

### **WORSHIP SERVICES/BULLETINS.**

- Celebrate the return! Hopefully, we will have some time to plan a Comeback Service, encourage praise, provide times of testimony.
- Families, cohabitating individuals may sit together.
- Ushers will ensure social distancing requirements are met.
- Until it is safe to do so:
  - a. we will avoid handing out bulletins; bulletins will be provided via our church app.
  - b. we will abstain from serving Communion.
  - c. we will avoid passing offering plates.
- We will provide drop box offering stations.
- Come up with a fun way to greet others in a no-contact way.
- Worship Director will clean the Altar after every use, once indoors.
- We will provide live stream worship services; continue to use online services (Facebook, YouTube).

### **AMENITIES.**

- Fellowship is suspended.
- We will provide:
  - touchless hand sanitizer stations at main entrance of each building.
  - hand sanitizer in all rooms, restrooms, sanctuary, kitchen, Narthex, and administrative offices.
  - supply masks for indoor services.

### **WORSHIP TEAM VOLUNTEERS – Upon return to In-House Worship.**

- Worship Director (Susan Whitlatch) will:
  - train worship team volunteers post-quarantine.
  - enlist greeters/ushers, as needed, to be both inside/outside church doors.
  - provide clickers for each usher to manage head count and proper seating.
  - open doors regularly to ensure open ventilation.

## **GENERAL HYGIENE RULES:**

- **IF YOU ARE SICK – STAY HOME!!!**
- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the [20-second hand-washing rule](#)). You can also use the sanitizers you will find around the Church.
- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, stay home.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL, PRESCHOOL, VBS AND SMALL GROUPS.**

- At this time, all Sunday school, VBS and Small Groups are suspended.
- Your Education Director will put together a plan and discuss same with his/her team leaders.
- Until we reconvene, we shall consider alternative avenues (e.g. zoom meeting rooms).
- When we reconvene indoor worship services, we will implement smaller classes/groups and/or offer alternative nights in order to maintain the social distancing standards.
- VBS has been suspended.
- When we resume class, each teacher(s), group leaders and/or volunteers (see Tech Section) will clean/sanitize tables, chairs, doorknobs, water fountains, and other high traffic areas in between uses.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics [recommends that children 2 years of age and under](#) do not wear masks or face coverings.

## **PRAISE BAND.**

- Music Director, while holding indoor practices, will:
  - consider not utilizing the full team at any one-time practice session; this to include team rotations and microphone assignment.
  - ensure all band members wear a face masks and maintain social distance requirements during practice (e.g. utilize both sides of the Altar).
  - Wipe down music stands, band equipment after each use.
  - Dismiss the band in a fashion to allow distancing,

## **EVENTS, FUNERALS, WEDDINGS, ETC.**

- We are not able to accommodate; all events are currently suspended.

## **TECH TEAMS (Property Manager).**

- We will enlist tech teams to clean the sanctuary, narthex, kitchen, restrooms, school rooms, conference rooms, offices, and work rooms after each use.