

Kviteseid Lutheran Church

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for "In-Sanctuary" Worship Beginning August 23, 2020

Kviteseid Lutheran Church, with guidance from the ELCA, has formulated a plan of action to safely re-open our facilities for in-person worship services. As a community of faith, our primary concern is to follow Jesus' commandment to love thy neighbor. This means it is paramount that we safeguard the health and well-being of our members, staff and the general public. To achieve this goal, this plan adheres to the guidelines set forth by Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Minnesota Department of Health.

General Guidelines: As we re-open our church home for regular services, there are certain individuals for whom it might be best to remain home and continue to enjoy online services until the pandemic threat has lessened. These general guidelines provide some advice on making the personal decision whether or not to return to in-person services.

- Those in high risk categories – over 65 with underlying health issues – are encouraged to stay home at this time. Worship services will continue to be available on Facebook and the church website.
- Anyone (staff or parishioner) who is experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19 should stay home. These include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste and smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Anyone who is living with someone who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home.
- Anyone who begins to feel unwell while they are in the building should leave immediately and isolate themselves at home.
- Social distance guidelines of 6 feet will be observed throughout the church.
- All individuals are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering or mask when they are able while in the building with others. Masks will be available to those who do not arrive with one.
- Kviteseid Lutheran Church will make every effort to enforce the guidelines put forth in this plan.

Building and Occupancy: The guidelines below are designed to ensure all attendees at services are safe from the time they enter the building until the time they exit. Please review them carefully and adhere to them while in the building.

- As of now, we are limited to 50% of what our sanctuary will hold to assure social distancing. Therefore, a strict limit of 200 persons will be enforced at all gatherings (including staff and worship leaders).
- A voluntary record of attendance will be kept for worship or other gatherings to help ensure information is available for contact tracing should this be necessary.
- Some spaces in the church will be sealed off to the public to minimize the need for additional cleaning and sanitization. These areas will be clearly marked and taped off.
- Please avoid congregating at entrance points; stagger your entry into the building so as to maintain social distancing.
- Individuals should avoid congregating for conversations inside the church building. Such fellowship is welcomed outside the church building while maintaining social distancing.
- For larger gatherings, when possible, doors will be propped open to minimize contact with door handles/knobs. In other instances, door attendants may be used to open doors for attendees.
- The sanctuary of the church will be filled from back to front to prevent people from walking by others who may be seated along the aisles. The space will be emptied from front to back to

ensure social distancing. Those individuals with mobility concerns may request special arrangements.

- All persons should keep coats, hats and other personal items with them at all times. Coat and hat racks will not be used to reduce the number of things that need to be sanitized.
- Please avoid congregating by the restrooms; maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
- Hand sanitizer will be made available throughout the church. All are encouraged to use it frequently when handwashing is not an option.
- Gatherings shall be limited to regular services, weddings and funerals.

Worship Service Guidelines: The following guidelines explain how services will be conducted until this plan is changed or additional guidance is given by the MN Department of Health and CDC. Please note that larger gatherings are still only allowed for regular services, funerals, and weddings. Social gatherings or celebrations are still limited to 10 or fewer attendees.

- Entrance to the church will be through the **NORTH** door only.
- An usher will write down the names of all attendees to help ensure information is available for contact tracing should this be necessary.
- You will be ushered to your pew. Every other pew will not be used.
- There will be no congregational singing during the worship service as studies have shown this to be a higher-risk activity that forcefully expels respiratory droplets into the air.
- Speaking in unison, as with the liturgy and prayers, will not be permitted. Worshipers may mouth the words silently, speaking them in their heart and mind.
- There will be no physical contact at any point during the service. The passing of the peace will occur but will be done without physical contact.
- There will be no passing of the collection plates. Offerings should be deposited in a basket as worshipers enter or exit the sanctuary.
- We will not use bulletins. The service will be projected onto the screen.
- Doors at the back of the sanctuary will be closed. The narthex will be roped off. There will be access to the stairs to use the downstairs bathrooms.
- At the end of the service, everyone will be ushered out through the north door.
- Communion will not be conducted until such time as safety of this sacrament can be ensured.
- Baptisms may be done on an arranged basis. Please contact the church office with questions regarding this.

Sanitizing of Facility: High traffic areas and items in the church will be sanitized prior to and after each service. To minimize the need for additional cleaning and sanitation, the sanctuary will be accessible to the general public only on Sunday mornings (or any other worship times) with the exceptions of scheduled funerals and weddings. Other spaces in the church will be cleaned and sanitized as per the normal schedule.

Staff Guidelines: All staff members are expected to abide by the guidelines set forth in this plan and assist in the enforcement of them. Specifically, staff should:

- Not report to work if they are feeling ill or have any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet when in the church building. They are strongly encouraged to utilize face masks when it is not possible to socially distance.
- Sanitize frequently used and shared equipment such as printers, photocopiers, microphones, etc.
- Wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer when this is not possible.
- Wash hands thoroughly and sanitize work surfaces before assembling any items for distribution to the public (bulletins, newsletters, communion supplies, worship materials, etc.)
- Report any concerns with the implementation of this plan to the Congregational President.