

Returning to In-Person Worship at First Lutheran Church

First Lutheran Church is committed to safely returning to worship beginning Sunday, May 23rd, 2021. We will carefully plan for each person attending to provide plenty of space and follow all guidelines issued by our local government, the Synod, and the CDC. Please carefully review these guidelines below before making the decision to attend in-person worship. **Those intending to return to in-person worship must register via the link included in the email or by calling the church office.** Space is limited so that we can safely maintain social distancing.

First Lutheran Church takes your safety, as well as that of our volunteers and staff, seriously. This plan follows a tight adherence to the ELCA guidelines and recommendations noted in *Considerations for Returning to In-Person Worship*. It is important for congregants to understand that we cannot guarantee your safety. By worshiping in person, you agree that you understand and assume the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and agree to release and hold First Lutheran Church harmless from any claim associated with exposure to the virus. In order for us to better care for our community, we ask that you follow all posted guidelines and verbal instructions while in the building or on church grounds. Thank you for your cooperation.

General Guidelines for Reopening Worship at First Lutheran Church

We ask that everyone follow the requirements listed below if they intend to return to in-person worship.

1. Public spaces in the church will be cleaned according to CDC guidelines.
2. Keep a social distance of 6 feet between you and individuals outside your household. We ask that all congregants respect the rule of no handshaking, hugging, and the like.
3. Masks, covering the mouth, nose, and chin, must be worn by all who attend worship services regardless of vaccination status. Those who cannot, or will not, wear a mask are asked to worship at home via the livestream.

4. Wash hands thoroughly (for 20 seconds or more) with soap and warm water before coming to First Lutheran. If soap is unavailable, hand sanitizer is an effective alternative.
5. Congregants-adults and children-who have underlying conditions should stay at home. These conditions significantly increase the risk of hospitalization and death from Covid- 19.
6. Congregants who have exhibited signs of illness within the last 48 hours such as a fever, cough, aches, or other symptoms of Covid-19 should stay home. For an updated list of Covid-19 symptoms visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
7. Congregants who have been exposed to someone with Covid-19 within the last 14 days should stay home.

During Worship

1. Congregants should enter through the doors under the portico in the parking lot only. Access to the building will be limited to parts of the Welcome Center, bathrooms, and Sanctuary/Nave only. *Note: There will be a record-keeper at the entrance to make note of everyone attending worship. In the event someone who attends in-person worship tests positive, we are prepared to assist the local health authorities with contact tracing.*
2. Upon arriving we ask Congregants to sanitize their hands at the provided stations and remain in the Welcome Center until your temperature has been taken. Anyone with a temperature at, or greater than, 100° F will not be admitted.
3. Ushers will help everyone into the sanctuary and show you where to sit. Please sit where the ushers ask as they will be seating people 6 ft. apart and maximizing social distance precautions.
4. There will be no hymnals in the pews and there will be no singing.
5. Communion will be served individually. Please do not remove your mask to receive communion until everyone is instructed to do so.
6. At the Peace, no touching will be permitted between individuals outside of your household.
7. We will not pass the plate during the Offertory. Plates will be located at the entrance for your weekly gift.

8. Masks should be pulled away from the mouth for Communion and put back in place once you have received the Lord's Supper.
9. Hand sanitizer is located throughout the building and in worship spaces for your use.
10. Use of the restrooms is limited to one person at a time.
11. No nursery or childcare will be available.

After Worship

1. No coffee, water, or refreshments will be available.
2. Ushers will dismiss attendees by row. When dismissed, please leave the building immediately through the Sanctuary doors on Colley Avenue.
3. Please take your bulletins with you and dispose of them. Please do not leave them in the pews.

We will err on the side of love for our neighbors and heed these guidelines for returning to in-person worship with patience, love, and grace. Change is inevitable and flexibility is necessary as we progress through these steps to return to in-person worship. As siblings in Christ, we remember at all times that the actions we choose during this difficult period are not intended to punish or limit our personal freedoms, but to care for one another. Therefore, we move forward together with a sense of shared compassion, care, and love that is the foundation of our faith as followers of Christ.