

# COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

for

## Trinity Lutheran Church

### 5.10.21

This plan template was developed to support implementation of public health activities required to minimize the spread of COVID19 at Trinity Lutheran Church and was informed by CDC Guidance. This template was designed with basic concepts and will require customization specific to each church. Steps may have been included or omitted in this template which will require the church to modify this plan according to their unique facility, mission, and activities. Examples found within this template have been provided for illustrative purposes and may not apply to each facility.

Developed by: Kim Kjellberg Title: Proj Mgr Date: 4.28.21

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Trinity Lutheran Church** is committed to providing a safe and healthy facility for our staff, members, and visitors. This plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure we implement strategies and procedures to preserve public health. It is expected that the entire church will have a role in implementing this plan to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 within our facility and our community that would result in a disruption to our mission. Therefore, all persons in our facility will be expected to comply with all aspects of this plan. The church leadership and council have full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

This plan has been developed with church staff and members by listening to employees, Pastor, church council and covid committee. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health, ELCA Synod and MN Governor Waltz's orders have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate including:

- Hygiene, cleaning, and disinfecting;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Controls for social distancing;
- Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfection and decontamination;
- Communications and training that will be provided to persons on-site; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

This preparedness and response plan assume the following:

1. Trinity Lutheran Church will follow guidance from the Minnesota Governor, the MN Department of Health, and from ELCA Synod.
2. Trinity Lutheran Church personnel will fall into different disease risk categories and decisions for return to the facility will be made in accordance with medical and public health guidance for risk stratification (e.g. age, health status) Trinity Lutheran's role is not to determine the risk level of individuals; rather the church leadership should ensure that individuals can make their own informed choices and be supported.
3. Trinity Lutheran Church personal and activities resumption will occur in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The COVID19 situation will evolve and Trinity Lutheran Church will remain adaptable and nimble to the dynamic environment. The baseline level of risk for those working and using our facility will change as restaurants and retail businesses reopen, schools reopen, etc., requiring a reassessment of what level of resumption and precautions are appropriate.
5. Those functions that can practically stay at home to complete work will do so until Trinity Lutheran Church is fully opened to minimize large gatherings.
6. Social distancing, wearing of masks or other appropriate PPE, hand-washing, and disinfection of surfaces are key factors to reducing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
7. Large gatherings are unlikely to be safe over the next several months. Worship services, and other large gatherings should be carried out online.
8. Personal responsibility is key to safe operations and the avoidance of disease transmission. Educational materials will be developed for staff, members, and visitors to the Trinity Lutheran Church facility.

## COVID-19 Plan Management

The COVID-19 church coordinator(s) is Kim Kjellberg and is responsible for COVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan with COVID Committee. All staff in the facility will be provided with the coordinator's name and how to contact the coordinator with any COVID-19 concerns. Call, text or email Kim Kjellberg. Infection control and occupational safety and health plans will apply to anyone working in or visiting the church (e.g., all staff, members, and visitors).

- The church has reached out to state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals and established ongoing communications to make sure they are getting relevant and up-to-date information concerning COVID-19.

Date contacted: \_\_Weekly on Fridays\_\_\_\_\_

State and/or local public health official: \_\_Minnesota Dept of Health\_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: \_Official State Website\_\_\_\_\_

- The church coordinator(s) and staff leadership are aware of and will follow all applicable regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Federal guidelines: CDC Guidelines

State guidelines: Minnesota Department of Health

Local guidelines: Wright County Department of Health

Affiliation guidelines: ELCA Synod Minneapolis, MN

- Facility assessments to identify COVID-19 risks and prevention strategies should be done periodically as part of sound occupational health and public health practice. This plan will be reviewed every month to ensure effectiveness.

## Facility Public Health Measures

Infection prevention measures are being implemented at our facility in accordance with public health guidance and best practices.

### Handwashing

Anyone in the Trinity Lutheran Church facility is instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on-site, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Dispensers of sanitizers will be placed in restrooms, church offices, Sunday school rooms and in common areas.

- A "Clean Your Hands!" poster are located in all restrooms providing proper hand washing methods. Posters are available from CDC and state departments of health.
- In occupied areas, custodial staff are checking and replenishing soap dispensers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer stations at a minimum of once per day, and more often in heavily trafficked public spaces

## Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Everyone is asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face—in particular their mouth, nose, and eyes—with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of in the trash and individuals should wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette reminders appear on posters and tissues and trash receptacles are readily available.

- The CDC “Stop the Spread of Germs” poster are posted in all building lobbies and other common areas.
- Tissues in common areas, including tables, desks and counters.
- Employees are expected to wear cloth face coverings (masks) in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Individuals may bring their own mask, or Trinity Lutheran Church may order them for staff.

## Social distancing

Everyone entering the facility is asked to practice social distancing on public health guidance and best practices. These measures may be adjusted according to phases of this preparedness and response plan.

### Remote Work and Adjusted Onsite Hours

Trinity Lutheran Church has implemented the following procedures and practices for remote work and adjusted hours. All staff will meet with their supervisor to determine an individual plan for work location based on responsibilities and risk levels.

- Telework is approved and expected for all persons who can accomplish their primary duty functions from home.
- Staff are provided guidance and training to work remotely. All tele-networking is handled by the technology committee.
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks. Equipment questions should be directed to the technology committee or immediate supervisor.
- Flexible hours and staggered shifts are available to minimize the number of persons in the facility at one time. We have a small staff of 2 in the office. No staggered shifts required.

### Onsite Work

Staff, members, and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas where six feet separation cannot be maintained. Staff, members, and visitors are required to wear masks at all times. Masks may be removed when staff are in their personal offices and where six feet of separation is feasible.

- Shared staff offices are assessed and where feasible staff are reassigned to other working areas or alternate hours to maintain social distancing. No shared offices on site.
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed in the trash after use.
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use, disposing of wipes in the trash.

- Staff will avoid using anyone else’s personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment.
- Common spaces such as break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms are rearranged to promote social distancing. Seating is spaced 6 feet apart.

## Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by Trinity Lutheran Church staff in accordance with [CDC guidance](#). Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g. break rooms) and high-touch areas (e.g. door handles, railings).

- All custodial staff and their supervisors are provided refresher training on proper cleaning techniques, as well as background information on COVID-19. There is one custodian trained in person.
- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to the Trinity Lutheran Church, the Custodian will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.
- Custodian will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons at least once daily, and more frequently if deemed necessary.

## Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies

Trinity Lutheran Church will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines, and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms by email or phone call. All COVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff during weekly staff meetings with updates occurring as needed.

Trinity Lutheran Church has leave policies that encourage staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies include: PTO and emergency leave.

- PTO
- Emergency Leave
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Paid Sick Leave (Federal)

Questions on leave policies should be directed to Bruce McNickle, Council President.

## Employee Self-Screening for those Working On-Site

Staff members should conduct self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Symptoms of the virus often include but are not limited to fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Information on COVID-19 signs and symptoms are available at the [CDC website](#).

Staff must report symptoms by phone, text or email to their immediate supervisor. Employees exhibiting symptoms should not come into the church.

- Take your temperature in the morning and when you return home from work. Log those results and report any fever to your supervisor.
- Report any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals, respiratory symptoms, sore throat, or dry cough to your supervisor.
- If the employee indicates any of these conditions, the supervisor may require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

If an employee begins to exhibit symptoms at work, report symptoms by phone, text or email to their immediate supervisor. Immediately leave the church.

### Confirmed Cases

If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a staff member or in a member of their household, the staff member will be asked to remain at home and considered to be in quarantine for no less than 14 days. A facility assessment will begin to determine what additional public health and cleaning measures should be implemented.

Trinity Lutheran Church will work with MN Dept of Health to inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in our facility, and MN Dept of Health will provide instructions regarding staff self-quarantine measures.

Consistent with compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), staff members health status and health information will be protected.

## Communications and Training

This preparedness and response plan is communicated with email copies any time it is updated. Training is available to staff and persons using the facility contact your immediate supervisor.

- Return to Work Training [handouts]
  - Topics should include but not limited to: Personal Protective Equipment, disinfection measures, social distancing protocol, COVID-19 signs and symptoms information, return-to-work policies, self-monitoring practices, signage, time-off options and all other COVID-19-related safe workplace changes.
- Enhanced Cleaning follow MN Dept of Health protocol
- Trinity Lutheran Church visitor requirements handout
- Trinity Lutheran Church facility use handout

## Facility Use

Trinity Lutheran Church serves as a gathering place for congregation and community members. Gathering purposes in the congregation include: congregational work, support to social justice missions, celebration

events, community meeting, and social engagements. Use of the facility will be based on the phases of this plan and align with state guidance and policies. Priority will be given mission related activities.

Any group that would like to use the facility while this plan is operational must request use using the Request for Facility Use form (Appendix A). Each request will be reviewed by an internal committee designated by church leadership.

If approved, each group utilizing the facility will be required:

- Review training provided by Trinity Lutheran Church
- Share Trinity Lutheran Church facility rules with participants
  - Conduct appropriate social distancing
  - Wear masks
  - Wash hands
  - Cover your cough
- Take attendance to include name and contact information

No member of the congregation or community may use the facility until they have received approval from the Trinity Lutheran Covid Committee.

## Resources

Resources used to support the church's decisions and activities during the COVID19 pandemic. The church used websites from MN Dept of Health, CDC and the ELCA synod.

## Trinity Lutheran Church Phases

The purpose of this phase approach is to provide guidance and direction for activities at the church. The disease progression is imperfectly known and there may be times where Trinity Lutheran Church may need to move back and forth between phases.

External Conditions	Church Activities
<b>Phase 0: Hibernation (March 25, 2020 to June 1, 2020)</b>	
<p><b>External Conditions:</b> Cases presenting in the state with limited community spread and testing is limited.</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> Government and organization leaders are initiating plans for social distancing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Assess risk to staff and congregation</li><li>● Meet with church council to determine facility hibernation plan</li><li>● Cancel or postpone facility onsite activities</li><li>● Plan for social distancing activities</li><li>● Meet with staff and initiate plan for hibernation activities</li></ul>
<b>Phase 1: Stay at Home (June 1, 2020 to January 11, 2021)</b>	

**External Conditions:**

Government Orders for communities to stay at home. Disease spread is occurring the in the community and hospitalization are increasing. Testing is limited and there are widespread PPE shortages.

**Criteria (for phase):**

Government issues to stay at home orders.

**Church Activities****Worship**

- Worship services move to online delivery.
- Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 ft of space between people.
- Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) are postponed and all participants notified.

**Activities on-site**

- All Trinity Lutheran Church staff will telework
- Staff may return to the facility to acquire equipment and record worship segments.
- Bible studies and small groups will meet online.

**Phase 2: Sunrise (January 12, 2021 to May 15, 2021)**

**External Conditions:**

There are declining case counts and availability of testing is increasing. Contact tracing is in place and PPE is available for social distancing purposes (e.g. cloth masks).

**Criteria (for phase):**

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to the facility.

**Church Activities**

Worship

- Worship is held online.
- Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 ft of space between people.
- Certain life celebrations (funerals) should be kept to less than 30 in attendance and be able to maintain social distancing. Approval is required.
- Other life celebrations (weddings, baptisms) should be kept to less than 10 in attendance and be able to maintain social distancing. Approval is required.

Activities on-site

- Bible studies and small groups continue to meet online.
- Office functions are limited to ensure essential operations.
- Church councils and leadership teams of less than 10 might consider meeting in person while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, or continue meeting online. ● Facility users/renters may be allowed with approval and based on size and mission. Social distancing and public health measures will be enforced.

**Phase 3: Sunrise Plus (May 16, 2021 to present)**

**External Conditions:**

Government leaders continue relaxation of social distancing measures. Cases of COVID19 continue to decrease and testing is available. PPE is widely available.

**Criteria (for phase):**

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to campus

Church has the ability to gradually expand number of people in the church while maintaining social distancing

**Church Activities****Worship**

- Worship is held online and in-person with social distancing measures implemented per local guidance. Multiple services may be considered to spread out participation.
- Entrance and exit into the church will be designed to avoid gathering.
- Communion/Eucharist may be offered in alignment with public health guidance. Consultation with church association/affiliation authorities will occur prior to offering.
- Group singing may be considered based on recommendations by public health authorities.
- No-touch alternatives for passing the peace, collecting offering, and liturgical resources. Consider removing prayer books and Bibles if you will have multiple services. Use bulletins (do not reuse) or screens as alternatives.
- No fellowship/social hour will be scheduled during this phase. People are encouraged to leave the building after the service (no mingling).

**Activities on-site**

- Bible studies and small groups meet in person while maintaining some online options for high risk individuals and those who do not feel comfortable being in public. Approval is required.
- Office functions resume as normal, with attention to cleaning.
- Groups, teams, and committees could meet in person. Approval is required.

High risk individuals (people over 60 and those with underlying conditions), whether staff, volunteers, or program participants, should continue to shelter in place during Phase 3.

Social distancing and public health practices (e.g. wearing masks) will be implemented while at church and in community ministry, as is recommended in public spaces.

**Phase 4: Normal Operations (Future)**

<p><b>External Conditions:</b> There are no or minimal state restrictions. Vaccine available. Widespread testing and identification of new COVID-19 cases, with quarantining is occurring.</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> No or minimal state restrictions.</p>	<p><b>Church Activities</b></p> <p>Business as usual.</p>
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## Trinity Lutheran Church Activities Chart

Content below is provided as an example. Churches should provide content aligned to their pre-determined phases.

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<b>Worship Services</b>	Online	Online	Online	In-Person with Social Distancing	Normal
<b>Students</b>	Online	Online	Online	Online	Normal
<b>Ministry Events</b>	Online	Online	Online	In-person with Social Distancing	Normal
<b>Office Staff</b>	Remote	Remote	Remote / Onsite with Social Distancing	Normal	Normal
<b>Community Groups</b>	Online / Postponed	Online / Postponed	In-Person with permission	In-person with permission	Normal
<b>Life Celebrations</b>	Postponed	Postponed	Postponed	In-Person with permission	Normal



## **Appendix A – Request for Facility Use**

### **Request for Trinity Lutheran Church Use**

Trinity Lutheran Church priority continues to be the health and safety of all members of our community. However, we also recognize that our facility supports the missions of our congregation and our community. Consistent with [name state] orders and public health advice, this form will enable church leadership to identify who might be permitted back to use the facility, starting first with groups who support essential church and social justice missions for our congregation and community.

For everyone’s safety, the church’s intent is to slowly and gradually invite groups back. Decisions for facility use will be based on phases of the Trinity Lutheran Church preparedness and response plan. To facilitate approval for use of our Trinity Lutheran Church, please complete the following form.

Name:

Group Size:

Will this gathering be repeated (e.g. weekly)? If yes, describe frequency.

Date for gathering(s):

Provide a brief summary of the gathering and why it must be done on-site or at another location away from your home.

Trinity Lutheran Church will provide guidance for use of the facility. Describe the precautions you will take to ensure your health and safety and the health and safety of those who will participate in the gathering. (methods and means for social distancing, PPE, etc.)

## **Appendix B - Guidance for developing a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan**

### **General**

CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)

### **Businesses**

CDC Resources for businesses and employers –

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html)

CDC General business frequently asked questions –

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/general-business-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/general-business-faq.html)

Federal OSHA – [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

### **Handwashing**

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) [www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

### **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html)

**Social distancing** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

### **Housekeeping**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html)

[www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

**Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

### **Training**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html)

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf)