



First English
Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod

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Dear beloved Saints of FELC,

I am writing another congregational letter to keep you apprised of the details regarding our return to worship. The elders have decided to open church service **starting May 31**. In the midst of COVID-19 we must be diligent and plan in a responsible way so that the health of our members is at the forefront of all our decisions. To that end I want to share those details so that, when you return to worship, you aren't overwhelmed by all the changes.

Our first open service will be May 31. For the foreseeable future we will not be having a 10:45 am service, only our 8:00 am service. Our first communion service will be a week later on Sunday, June 7. We will continue using Divine Service 5 until the third Sunday of June at which time we will return to our normal worship planner. Since the early service is the only worship opportunity, we will not be having our blended services or praise teams. The elders have not discussed when the praise team services will begin, but it will not be throughout the summer months.

We will forego coffee and donut time in the fellowship hall. Youth Sunday school will not be held until further notice (probably throughout the summer); however, Pastor's Sunday Bible study will continue to be live streamed on the FELC Facebook page.

There will be several **strongly recommended** guidelines for worship.

- 1) Everyone must wear a mask upon entering and leaving. (It is okay if you wish to remove your masks to sing or speak during the service.) If you don't have a mask, some of our members have made them for you to pick up and keep. They will be by the front door as you enter. Remember to wash your masks after wearing them.
- 2) Members over 60 and those with chronic health conditions have been encouraged by the medical community to stay home and continue worshipping online or by radio; however, that is only a recommendation. If you decide to attend, please consider the risk you bear.
- 3) We think we can worship 150 people max (the number of people will depend on how many people are in each social group). If we hit the attendance limit the people who came later cannot be admitted. They may choose to sit in the parking lot and watch it while sitting in their cars through the use of live-streaming on their phones or to return home.
- 4) The west doors will be locked, so everyone will be asked to enter through the main doors on the east side of the church. As you enter, we ask that you maintain proper social distancing. All doors will be propped open (including the bathroom doors). Please do not wander off into other areas of the church.
- 5) As you enter the sanctuary, you will be asked to sit immediately and fill the pews from front to back (this includes each section), so we will fill the front row of every section first.
- 6) The elders have removed the pew pads from the restricted pews and have set them on the floor. These pews/rows are off-limits. Sit only in the pews with pads.
- 7) In order to maintain a 6-foot distance, a maximum of four people can sit on opposite ends of one pew—two on each end—or—three on one end, and one on the other. (Be aware... if four people sit in the middle pews, the distance between them is only five feet, so choose your seating appropriately.) If your social group is larger than four you may take the whole pew but we ask that you sit in the middle of the pew. The staggering will help with the distancing concerns.
- 8) There will be a sanitizer station to use as you enter and as you leave.
- 9) Once the sanctuary is filled, the overflow will be directed to sit in the fellowship hall.

- 10) The elders spaced chairs in the fellowship hall (four chairs per section). If you have more than four in your group, please borrow a chair from another row to complete your needs, but keep in mind the 6-foot distancing requirement.
- 11) We will not sanitize the sanctuary/fellowship hall after worship. Instead, we will let it sit fallow for four days so that the virus has time to decompose before we use those areas again.
- 12) We will not have "sharing of the peace".
- 13) We ask people not to use the hymnals. We will also not be handing out bulletins. If you want a bulletin, you can print it on your own by downloading it from our website and then bring it with you. All communication of the service will be done through the worship screens.
- 14) We will not be having an offering during the service. You can place your offering envelopes in the appropriate place as you leave the church. We will also provide a place to deposit your attendance cards as you leave.
- 15) At the end of the service, we will NOT all leave at the same time, as we are accustomed to doing. Instead, the elders will usher you out from the back to the front, starting first in the fellowship hall. They will dismiss you in social groups, and we ask that you remember to maintain a 6-foot distance as you exit.
- 16) NO VISITING IN THE CHURCH. As you exit, please keep the flow moving! The people in the front of the church will appreciate that! If you want to visit, you are welcome to go to the grassy area in front of the church and talk, but please remember to obey social distancing rules.
- 17) **Our first communion service will be held on Sunday, June 7.** If you feel uncomfortable taking communion, please stay in your seat. We will have two elders handling the elements and distributing them. Every elder will take their own temperature before the service begins. They will also wear gloves, wash their hands properly, use disinfectant, and wear a mask, but they will be required to touch the wafer in order to give it to you. Please understand the risk.
- 18) Communicant members are welcome; children are encouraged to remain in their pews, unless they cannot be left unattended.
- 19) The elders will serve from two stations: one on the east side and one on the west.
- 20) When you come forward to receive communion, put on your mask before you leave your seat.
- 21) We will have continuous communion (please do not use the altar rail). Groups will be released from front to back according to social groups.
- 22) For disposal of your communion cup, trash cans will be placed near the elder as you head back to your pew.
- 23) We have ordered prepackaged wine and wafer sets where everything is sealed; however, we don't know when those will arrive. When they do arrive, they will fit in the communion cup tray. You will pick up the cup and remove the first layer of sealed foil to reach your wafer, and you will remove the second layer of sealed foil to drink the wine. Again, we ask social groups to eat and drink the wine together up front, after they have received them, and then dispose of the cup and foil in the trash. The next social group will not be invited forward until you have vacated your space.
- 24) Communion will be set up very early in the week and then be left alone until the following Sunday. Again, this gives the virus time to decompose.

I hope I have been able to convey the details clearly. If not, please be patient with us as we work to guide and direct people in and out safely.

If you are not at risk and are willing to come, we look forward to seeing your face on May 31 at 8:00 am! God's blessings to you.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Paul Kaldahl