

# LUTHERAN CHURCH HEALTH SAFETY PLAN

*DRAFT - Revised March 13, 2020*

## **VISION:**

As people of faith, we are called to support the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the community. We acknowledge a deep responsibility to one another and to making wise and deliberate decisions based on facts and health expert recommendations, rather than on fears. As we consider actions that could lead to physical distance, we also remember that having the love and support of one another and the nearness of our God is what lowers anxiety and makes tough situations easier to navigate.

## **STAGE 0 - LOW RISK:**

**Indicators:** Low risk of infectious disease transmission nationally and locally

**Actions:** We operate under normal practices, reminding servers to practice handwashing, safe food handling, and general cleanliness.

## **STAGE 1 - POTENTIAL RISK:**

**Indicators:** Potential risk nationally, no cases reported in the Metropolitan area or County.

**Actions:** Encourage and educate congregation regarding hygiene practices and risk . . .

- Send reminder to Altar Guild, Communion Assistants, Assisting Minister, Ushers, Greeters, and Fellowship Hosts to fully wash or sanitize hands prior to service.
- Post hand washing reminders in bathrooms, kitchen, and sacristy, along with handwashing tips
- Prop open as many doors as possible to minimize touching of handles/crash bars
- Sanitize surfaces before and/or after large gatherings.
- Announce that we may have different contact preferences, name alternatives to handshakes, and encourage respect of personal preferences
- Place hand sanitizer at points of entry, gathering, and food service.
- Make surface sanitizing products readily available and accessible.
- Ensure open food and plates/cups/napkins/utensils are not stored out in open.
- Encourage members to remain home if sick.

## **STAGE 2 - ELEVATED RISK:**

**Indicators:** Confirmed but limited cases within metropolitan area or County.

**Actions:** Reduce interpersonal contact, maintaining contact/food service that can be controlled by an individual or small group of individuals . . .

- Remove common cup from Communion. Blessers to give verbal blessing only.
- Cease direct, physical exchange of peace between congregants.
- Stop passing offering plate, replacing it with baskets at entry points and alternatives for digital giving.
- Provide gloves for offering counters.
- Make full recordings of worship more readily available if requested.
- Evaluate communication distribution list to make sure all members can and are receiving communication when not physically present.
- Allow for member contact if mutually agreed upon.
- Pastor shakes hands only when initiated by the other person.
- Begin developing resources and infrastructure for Stages 3 and 4.

### **STAGE 3 - HIGH RISK:**

**Indicators:** Increasing cases within metropolitan area and/or County.

**Actions:** Discourage all interpersonal contact and suspend all food service . . .

- Discontinue all food service, including coffee, fellowship treats, meals, and Communion (?).
- Broadcast all worship services over the internet, securing necessary copyright permissions.
- Suspend Sunday School. Other meetings or adult education may continue with limited contact.
- Pastor ceases shaking all hands.
- As much as possible, pastor checks in with homebound and those expressing the need to stay home.
- Remind members importance of continued financial support of the church due to ongoing expenses. Make online/mobile giving opportunities easy and abundant.
- Develop resources for Stage 4, including a phone tree to ensure open lines of communication, remote worship plans, remote meeting plans, connection groups, etc.

### **STAGE 4 - GATHERING MORATORIUM:**

**Indicators:** Recommendation of National or Local Health Department and/or closing of Public Schools.

**Actions:** Suspension of all in-person worship, meetings, and other gatherings

- No worship, meetings, or other gatherings (congregational or outside groups) shall be held at the church building.
- Use phone tree to make sure all active members are receiving communication and to assess needs.
- Worship is broadcast online every Sunday in a way that can be followed at home, with opportunity for interaction, as well as via DVD for those requesting it.
- New studies to be held remotely, including a variety of video presentation, live video chat, and blog/bulletin board/social media.
- Council and other meetings held remotely.
- Touch points (e.g. prayers, Bible verse, conversation starters, and other inspirational contacts) through social media/text/e-mail to be made at least every other day.
- Routinize check-ins of all active members, including assessment of needs of vulnerable members.
- Thermostats adjusted to save costs.

### **STAGE CHANGE CONFIRMATION:**

By unanimous consent of Executive Committee of the Congregation