

# GRACE OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH COVID-19 PLAN

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted our lives in many ways. It has also impacted the life of the church and our congregation. While there are lots of adjustments we've had to make in what we can do together, we have never been "closed!" We remain open to love and care for our neighbor, open to ministry, open to worship and open to community here at Grace of God even if we have to do these things differently. Our congregation has actually grown since the pandemic began with many new friends worshipping with us online. And we have continued to be engaged in the support of our ministry here and in love for one another.

We want to prepare for the time when we can gather together again in our building. Here is our plan for doing that:

## TIMING

We have not set a specific date for when that will happen (not before July) but here are some markers we are using to determine the date for gathering in our building for worship:

1. Evidence of a **consistent decline** in new COVID-19 cases in our community.
2. Available use of our **new video streaming equipment** to continue streaming while having in-person worship.
3. Evidence from the opening of businesses, churches and other venues in our community that indicates **no substantial increase in risk**

## SOME THINGS GRACE OF GOD WILL DO WHEN WE GATHER

1. As a way of protecting each other, we will highly encourage everyone to wear a face covering or **mask**, if they are able. We will have masks available at the church entrance.
2. Make **hand sanitizer** available in the building
3. **Clean and sanitize** the building (especially contact areas) before and after worship gatherings
4. **Arrange seating** in the worship space to accommodate physical distancing
5. **Avoid serving food and coffee** after worship
6. **Post our safety plan** in the building

## SOME ADJUSTMENTS TO WORSHIP

1. We will begin **without a processional**
2. We will **collect offerings in a plate in the entryway** to the worship space instead of passing the offering plate
3. We will use **individual sanitary bread and wine cups** (like some used for Easter) at least initially. These will be available to pick up as you walk in the building for worship.
4. We will offer **communion every other Sunday**. On non-communion Sundays we will set apart (consecrate) the bread and wine for use the next Sunday. During the week, our Elders will deliver communion cups to those who request them and want to participate in worship online.
5. We will **make use of cantors, instrumental and recorded music** for our worship, since evidence indicates that community singing may be a manner in which COVID is readily transmitted.

## SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO

1. To care for yourself and protect your neighbor, **stay home from worship when you feel sick** or if you have common symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
2. **Practice social distancing** (6 ft) before, during, and after worship.
3. **Use the live-streamed worship service at home if you are at high risk** for severe COVID-19. Examples of risk factors for more severe infections include age over 65, diabetes, heart disease, severe kidney or liver disease, lung disease, or conditions that suppress the immune system. We encourage you to consult with your doctor if you have questions about these recommendations.
4. If you feel uncomfortable being in the building, you are encouraged to **participate in worship online**. ([facebook.com/graceofgodlutheran](https://facebook.com/graceofgodlutheran)) We will continue to offer live-streaming worship of our Sunday morning services.
5. Continue to **support our congregation** with your offerings either by mail or online at [graceofgodlutheran.com](https://graceofgodlutheran.com).
6. **Be patient and understanding**, knowing that there will be diversity of opinion on how best to be safe and protect our neighbor.