

**Worship and Ministry at Salem Lutheran Church of Hermantown, Minnesota**  
**A Preparedness Plan in response to COVID-19**  
**July 2020, revised September 2020**

In response to the coronavirus pandemic and to various state and national health organizations (Center for Disease Control [CDC] and Minnesota Department of Health [MDH]) and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Salem Lutheran Church has this Preparedness Plan in response to COVID-19 and the worship and ministry life of this congregation. The health and safety of Salem members, friends and visitors is the primary concern. The Salem Smart Team and Congregational Council will continue to monitor the situation, weigh the risks involved for all, and take appropriate action.

As the number of COVID-19 cases increased, the decision was made by the Salem Congregation Council in March to suspend any and all church activities, including worship, until further notice. Staff, volunteers, members and guests were encouraged to remain away from the building as much as possible. Staff and clients for *Laugh & Learn Childcare* and *Chickadee Catering* have their own plans in place for their operation.

The following three phases are in place for Salem depending on the current health situation and recommendations of the CDC and MDH.

**Phase 1 – Only Online worship**

1. Worship will be carried out online. Worship participants as much as possible will lead worship from their homes. If necessary, worship leaders will maintain six foot physical distances from other non-family members in the building, for worship planning and leading worship.
2. Other ministries (visiting, quilters, Sunday School, etc.) will not use the building or grounds for their particular ministry, but rather carry on their ministries through telephone, mail and Internet methods.
3. Staff, Salem Smart Team and Salem Congregation Council will monitor the CDC, MDH and other organizations for current recommendations.

## Phase 2 – Parking Lot Worship

As the State of Minnesota (the governor's office and MDH) allows the opening up of certain businesses and organizations, the Salem Smart Team and/or Congregational Council will consider opening up worship and providing an opportunity for worship in the Salem parking lot. Online worship opportunities will continue to be offered.

1. As Salem begins its *Park, Pray, Praise* (parking lot) worship, the following guidelines are to be followed:
  - a. Worshipers and worship leaders who show symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat or loss of taste or smell) and/or who have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 are asked to stay home.
  - b. Worshipers are to remain in their cars at all times. If windows are down, cars will need to be spaced a minimum of six feet apart.
  - c. Worship leaders, ushers, and the tech team will wear face masks, will wash their hands frequently and stay six feet away from other non-households leaders.
  - d. Worship leaders, ushers, and the tech team will have access to the hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. All equipment should be disinfected weekly.
  - e. Ushers will give out bulletins as cars enter the parking lot.
  - f. The lead communion council member (or a replacement) will give out individual containers of the wafers and the wine/juice.
  - g. Offering will be collected as cars leave the parking lot with ushers holding an offering can.
  - h. All passing of things between worshipers will be strongly discouraged.

### **Phase 3 – Limited Gatherings in the Sanctuary**

As the MDH allows businesses and organizations to open up safely, the Salem Smart Team and Salem Congregational Council will consider what steps they may take to allow Salem members, friends, guests and visitors to use the building on a limited basis, considering any and all potential risks involved and the current guidelines from the MDH. Examples of limited gatherings in the Sanctuary include worship, funerals and weddings. Limited gatherings in the sanctuary and other parts of the building will adhere to the following current guidelines.

1. The current capacity of the sanctuary and other parts of the building is limited to 50% of maximum capacity (approximately 75[?] people total in the sanctuary).
2. Worshipers, staff, volunteers and friends will be asked to remain at home if they show any symptoms of COVID-19 and/or have been exposed to COVID-19 and/or are in a high risk demographic. People coming into the building will be asked to self-monitor themselves for COVID-19. Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea or loss of taste or smell.
3. Worshipers and people entering are required to wear a face mask or some cloth facial covering while in the Salem building.
4. Salem volunteers will record the names of people who enter the building. This way Salem can notify people in attendance at a particular event that someone has tested positive for COVID-19. These volunteers will ask appropriate screening questions (exposure to COVID-19, travel to current COVID-19 hotspots, etc.) of all and will take temperatures and record these temperatures of all people. Anyone with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher will be asked to leave.
5. Congregational singing and responses during worship will not be allowed. (non-speaking responses - whispering, clicking, clapping, etc.)
6. Frequent handwashing is encouraged and hand sanitizer will be available.
7. We ask members, friends, guests and visitors to inform the church office if they learn that they test positive for COVID-19. Salem will attempt to notify people who may have been in the building at the same time.
8. Physical touching (handshakes, hugs, sharing of the peace, etc.) will not be allowed.
9. There will be no fellowship following worship.
10. The nursery will not be available. Children will remain with their families.
11. Physical distancing of six feet or more will be maintained between different households.
12. Ushers will direct people to seats and will usher people out following worship.
13. Bulletins, offering plates and individualized Holy Communion will be available as people enter or leave the sanctuary.
14. Hymnals, song books and Bibles will be removed from the sanctuary.
15. Parts of the building used by people will be cleaned properly before and after any usage of any part of the building.

## **Phase 4 – Future Gatherings in the Sanctuary**

As the MDH allows for larger indoor gatherings, the Salem Smart Team and Salem Congregational Council will consider steps for larger gatherings of members, friends, guests and visitors to use the building (Phase 4). Consideration of any and all potential risks will be discussed before permitting large group gatherings, including regular Sunday worship, education, fellowship, events, etc., following the guidance of the CDC, MDH and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod.

Approved by

Salem Smart Team

Salem Congregation Council

September 21, 2020