

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Re-Opening Guidelines & Expectations - SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Introduction

In the interest of safety, the congregational council of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church has adopted these practices to promote a sanitary worship experience. Guidelines and protocols have been derived from the recommended practices from both the Centers for Disease Control, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The council would ask that you prayerfully discern when the appropriate time will be for you to return to church. Patience, grace, and flexibility will be necessary as you strive to make the most appropriate decision for you. The church council is praying for you and will honor and support your decision. In order to assist you in making your decision we have outlined our safety guidelines and expectations below. As good and faithful stewards we must highlight the fact that the CDC states people over 65 or have underlying conditions, are at a greater risk for covid19. It is expected that if you have been in contact with anyone ill over the past 14 days and/or are exhibiting symptoms of illness you refrain from attending in person services.

Physical Building and Grounds

Attendance: We will follow state guidelines for gathering size. At this time, it is no more than 25 persons per service. This number will increase as we transition to the green phase.

Arrival: No sooner than 15 minutes before the start time of the scheduled service. Congregants will enter via the Mauch Chunk Office Entrance only, and receive a bulletin, and communion kit. You will place your offering in the plate at this time and be seated by an usher.

Common Areas: The following areas of the church are closed. The Gathering Room, Library, Choir Room, Classrooms, Gym and Kitchen. No Access to the first or third floor.

Restrooms: Congregants will use only the All Gender Restroom 2 on the Sanctuary Level. The designated Men's and Ladies Rooms in the stair towers, and the All Gender Restroom on Level 1 are closed. The All Gender Restroom can accommodate 1 person at a time, and we ask you follow social distance practices if you are waiting to use the restroom.

Fresh Air: Windows will be open to encourage fresh air over recycled air.

Hygiene, Safety, & Physical Distancing

Hand Sanitizer: We will provide hand sanitizer at all entrances and in the pews. Hand sanitizer bottles will be disinfected after each service.

Surfaces: Door handles, handrails, pews, and pew backs will be disinfected after each worship service.

Face masks: Face masks/coverings are required.

Hand Washing: All congregants are reminded to wash their hands frequently, and to use hand sanitizer when water and soap are not available.

Services: In order to socially distance, and accommodate as many congregants as possible, three services will be offered. Doors will be unlocked no sooner than 15 mins prior to the start of the service. At this time services will 5:30pm on Saturday, and 8am, and 10am on Sunday. Congregants are asked to follow social distancing guidelines by observing the ground markings on the pavement while they are waiting to enter the church.

Entering the Church: When the doors are open, family units will be guided in one at a time. Congregants will receive bulletins, a communion kit. They will place their offering in the plate at this time and be guided to their seat by an usher. There will be two empty pews in between each seated pew.

Exiting the Church: At the conclusion of the service, following the organ postlude, we ask congregants to exit the church while observing social distancing. There will be no social gathering until we transition to the green phase. While we understand not socializing with our church family is difficult, we ask you to exit the building in a timely manner so we can begin sanitation procedures for the next service. Please take your bulletin, and communion kit home for disposal.

Speaking, Singing, and Playing Instruments in Worship

All Liturgy will be spoken, and in person worshippers will NOT sing the hymns as the organ plays. Singing together, even from a distance, is one of the riskiest behaviors due to the spread of aerosol and droplets that can carry the virus a significant distance and remain suspended in the air. A cloth mask is unlikely to protect you or your neighbor during singing. There will be no use of wind instruments (ex. trumpets) until the green phase.

Hymnals: Hymnals have been removed from the pews. Everything you need will be printed in the bulletin.

Worship Practices

Kneeling: There will be no kneeling at this time.

Offering: You will place your offering in the plate, as you enter the church.

Sharing of the Peace: There will be no hugging, handshaking, or body contact during the Sharing of the Peace. We ask that you remain in your pew, exchange the words, and offer a wave, or a reverent bow.

Holy Baptism: The baptismal font will be sanitized and filled with fresh water before a baptism. The baptismal font will be closed if no baptism is taking place. In the event the font cover is off we ask congregants not to touch the water.

Holy Communion: Communion will take place in the pews at the direction of the Pastor. When it is time for communion, congregants will be directed to sanitize their hands in the pews prior to opening their communion kits. Worship leaders will sanitize their hands at the altar. After communion please put the wine/juice cup back in the bag and take it home with you for disposal.

Worship Leadership

Worship leaders do not need to wear masks when they are 6 feet or more away from the congregation. (an analogy for this would be public health officials who do not wear masks for press conferences when following physical distancing protocol) Leaders may still choose to wear masks and should, if they come into closer proximity with others.

Worship Leadership will be as follows:

Pastor – Leads the Worship Service

Worship Assistant - Serves as an Usher before service, & Acolyte/Lay Communion Assistant during service

Reader – Serves as an Usher before service, and a Cantor/Lector during service

Sound/Video Technician - Serves as an Usher before service, brings offering forward, and records service.

Church Organist – Plays organ during service.

Provisional Timeline by Size of Gathering

During the yellow phase we are permitted to have 25 occupants in the church. (5 Church Staff, & 20 Congregants) The process for selecting who will attend worship is as follows: Regularly Attending Congregants will be contacted in alphabetical order to schedule the day and time you will attend church “Regularly Attending Congregant” is defined as a congregant who attends church 2 or more times a month under normal circumstances. If you attend less than twice a month and would like to attend, please contact the church and express your interest in attending services. Due to the limited number of spaces available, if you agree to attend please do attend. In the event something comes up please contact the church so we can open your seat to another parishioner. In order to stay within the required guidelines of 25 occupants, please do not show up at the church if you have not been contacted to attend. Unfortunately, if your name is not on the schedule for the service, we will be unable to admit you into the church. We assure you everyone will get a turn to attend. To reiterate please know attendance is a personal choice, and it is understandable if now is not the right time for you. Online Worship will continue to be an alternative option for those not wishing to participate in “in person worship” at this time.

Elevator: Congregants needing to use the elevator to enter/exit the church, can request this when they are contacted to attend church. Arrangements can be made for anyone needing assistance. On days it is used, the elevator will go through our sanitation process to ensure your safety.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Re-Opening Guidelines & Expectations - SATURDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Introduction

In the interest of safety, the congregational council of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church has adopted these practices to promote a sanitary worship experience. Guidelines and protocols have been derived from the recommended practices from both the Centers for Disease Control, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The council would ask that you prayerfully discern when the appropriate time will be for you to return to church. Patience, grace, and flexibility will be necessary as you strive to make the most appropriate decision for you. The church council is praying for you and will honor and support your decision. In order to assist you in making your decision we have outlined our safety guidelines and expectations below. As good and faithful stewards we must highlight the fact that the CDC states people over 65 or have underlying conditions, are at a greater risk for covid19. It is expected that if you have been in contact with anyone ill over the past 14 days and/or are exhibiting symptoms of illness you refrain from attending in person services.

Physical Building and Grounds

Attendance: We will follow state guidelines for gathering size. At this time, it is no more than 25 persons per service. This number will increase as we transition to the green phase.

Arrival: No sooner than 15 minutes before the start time of the scheduled service. Congregants will enter via the Mauch Chunk Corner Entrance only, and receive a bulletin, and communion kit (if applicable). You will place your offering in the plate at this time and be seated by an usher.

Common Areas: The following areas of the church are closed. The Gathering Room, Library, Choir Room, Classrooms, Gym and Kitchen. No Access to the second or third floor.

Restrooms: Congregants will use only the All Gender Restroom 1 on the First Level. The designated Men's and Ladies Rooms in the stair towers, and All Gender Restroom 2 on Level 2 are closed. The All Gender Restroom can accommodate 1 person at a time, and we ask you follow social distance practices if you are waiting to use the restroom.

Fresh Air: Windows will be open to encourage fresh air over recycled air.

Hygiene, Safety, & Physical Distancing

Hand Sanitizer: We will provide hand sanitizer at all entrances and in the seats. Hand sanitizer bottles will be disinfected after each service.

Surfaces: Door handles, handrails, chairs, and armrests will be disinfected after each worship service.

Face masks: Face masks/coverings are required.

Hand Washing: All congregants are reminded to wash their hands frequently, and to use hand sanitizer when water and soap are not available.

Services: In order to socially distance, and accommodate as many congregants as possible, three services will be offered. Doors will be unlocked no sooner than 15 mins prior to the start of the service. At this time services will 5:30pm on Saturday, and 8am, and 10am on Sunday. Congregants are asked to follow social distancing guidelines by observing the ground markings on the pavement while they are waiting to enter the church.

Entering the Church: When the doors are open, family units will be guided in one at a time. Congregants will receive bulletins, a communion kit (if applicable). They will place their offering in the plate at this time and be guided to their seat by an usher. There will be two empty pews in between each seated pew.

Exiting the Church: At the conclusion of the service, following the closing prayer, we ask congregants to exit the church while observing social distancing. There will be no social gathering until we transition to the green phase. While we understand not socializing with our church family is difficult, we ask you to exit the building in a timely manner so we can begin sanitation procedures for the next service. Please take your bulletin, and communion kit (if applicable) home for disposal.

Speaking, Singing, and Playing Instruments in Worship

All Liturgy will be spoken, and in person worshippers will NOT sing hymns. Singing together, even from a distance, is one of the riskiest behaviors due to the spread of aerosol and droplets that can carry the virus a significant distance and remain suspended in the air. A cloth mask is unlikely to protect you or your neighbor during singing. There will be no use of wind instruments (ex. trumpets) until the green phase.

Hymnals: Not Applicable. Hymnals & Songbooks are not used during the Saturday Service.

Worship Practices

Kneeling: Not Applicable. There is no kneeling during the Saturday Service.

Offering: You will place your offering in the plate, as you enter the church.

Sharing of the Peace: There will be no hugging, handshaking, or body contact during the Sharing of the Peace. We ask that you remain in your seat, exchange the words, and offer a wave, or a reverent bow.

Holy Baptism: The baptismal font will be sanitized and filled with fresh water before a baptism. The baptismal font will be closed if no baptism is taking place. In the event the font cover is off we ask congregants not to touch the water.

Holy Communion: (If Applicable) Communion will take place in your seat at the direction of the Pastor. When it is time for communion, congregants will be directed to sanitize their hands in their seats prior to opening their communion kits. Worship leaders will sanitize their hands at the altar. After communion please put the wine/juice cup back in the bag and take it home with you for disposal.

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