

Re-opening the church building

COVID 19 has had a huge impact on our daily lives. At Good Shepherd we cancelled worship services, Sunday School classes, meetings, and activities of various kinds. Federal, state, and local leaders, as well as the ELCA, have given us directives and recommendations to help curb the spread of this potentially deadly virus. Progress has been made and we are now seeing some of these restrictions modified to allow us to begin returning to a more normal lifestyle. Before I engaged the council in a discussion about re-opening I spoke with 2 key persons, Bobbie [REDACTED] and Jim [REDACTED], for without them the worship services would be severely weakened. Each of them did not hesitate for a moment before answering, yes, they are ready to resume their services. At our May 19th council meeting we debated re-opening our building under several strict procedures. The vote was not unanimous but council agreed to offer the option to our members and guests to come to the House of God for a modified worship service. Virtual services will continue to be available in the form of live streaming or viewing of recorded services. Here are many of the key restrictions.

- Entrance doors to the narthex and sanctuary will be propped open to avoid touching.
- Temporal thermometers will take everyone's temperature.
- A person with a temperature at 100.4F or higher will not be permitted to enter.
- Facial masks will be required at all times.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided immediately inside the narthex and must be used.
- Every other pew will be roped-off to provide a 6' minimum distancing.
- A maximum of 3 persons per pew, except for families, marked for safe distancing.
- The liturgy will be spoken, not sung.
- Hymns/music will be by Pastor, Jim [REDACTED], Bobbie [REDACTED], guests, or prerecorded.
- No hand-to-hand communion.
- Individually sealed communion juice and wafer will be available as you exit.
- No children's sermon.
- No passing of the offering plate. Offering plates will be at the sanctuary door.
- People who cough or sneeze must leave.
- No hospitality.
- Outdoor seating will be spaced at least 6' apart.

I want to emphasize that your participation in these services is voluntary. Only you can decide when you are ready to come back inside Good Shepherd. People who don't feel healthy that particular day or who have health conditions that place them at high risk should not attend. We are trying to provide a responsible way for in-person worship services to resume. As of this writing we haven't set a start date for this but it could be May 31st or June 7th. More information will be forthcoming. Please contact Pastor, me, or other council persons with your thoughts. The best number to reach me is [REDACTED].

Peace be with you,
Mark Lytle
Council President

Blessings of Peace
Patrick J. Van De Motter
Pastor