

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDELINES FOR SANCTUARY SERVICES
APPROVED BY PPC on JUNE 3, 2020

PART 1: REOPENING DATE – SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2020 – 9:15 AM

PPC has decided to wait until Juniata County has been declared to be in **GREEN STATUS (Friday, June 12th)** before opening our church building for services. Even at that point, certain items will need to be discussed and put into action before returning to our beautiful sanctuary. During the yellow phase we have prepared our procedures and guidelines for that eventual opening.

PART 2: ENTRANCE & EXIT PROCEDURES:

- A. **ENTRANCE:** The Washington Avenue entrance (with steps) will be used by all except those who need to use the handicapped-accessible door. The north-west Washington Avenue street-level door (at the rear of the Adult Sunday School room) will be the designated handicapped-accessible entrance and exit.
- B. **EXIT:** Both Washington Avenue doors may be used for exiting at the conclusion of the service. In this way we hope to maintain social distancing and avoid one individual entering a door at the same time another is trying to exit that doorway.
- C. All other doors are not to be used except for emergency exit.
- D. Facemasks are **required** by all entering our church building until further notice.
- E. Only those MLC members who are willing to maintain social distancing conditions should attend our in-church services. Online, recorded services will be provided to all others, or you may sit in our church parking lot (or at home if within $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile) and listen on our radio frequency AM 1700.
- F. All other areas of the church will be **CLOSED/OFF-LIMITS**.

PART 3: SEATING:

- A. Pew seating will be open for alternate pews so that a vacant pew is between attendees so as to follow CDC guidelines. Bulletins will be placed in the pews where attendees should be seated.
- B. The Large Adult Sunday School room seating will be spaced according to social distancing guidelines (6-foot separation).

- C. Please move directly to your seating area when entering the church. Do not block areas so others may pass by.
- D. Some pews will be blocked from use. Please do NOT remove any tape or ropes.
- E. Sanitizer stations will be placed in the sanctuary and adult Sunday school areas. Please use them before, during, and after the service.
- F. Family members may sit together in the designated open seating areas. Children are to be attended to **at all times**. The nursery will not be open.
- G. The Baptismal font at the rear of the sanctuary will remain empty unless an actual baptism is scheduled for a particular Sunday.

PART 4: WORSHIP SERVICE STYLE

- A. The length of worship services will be limited to no more than 45 minutes.
- B. Service bulletins will be placed in the seating areas before the service. They are to be taken home for disposal or for your reference.
- C. The hymns will be placed in the bulletins and will be played by the organist. Until further notice, please do not sing aloud but instead read along silently.
- D. Children will remain seated with their parents for any Children's Sermon.
- E. Any prayers or responses said in unison will be limited in use in our services.
- F. Only the vicar, choir director, and organist will be in the altar and pulpit area. The lector for the service will use the lectern for the reading of the lessons.
- G. There will be no communion until further notice. Please observe fasting instead.
- H. There will be no handshaking or back-patting passing of the peace until further notice. When it comes to this part of the service, please just say "Peace be with you" or wave to those person(s).
- I. We will not be signing the friendship books in each pew, nor will we be using any hymnals or other books normally in the pews.
- J. Offering plates will be placed at each of the two exit/entrances in the nave and at the rear of the adult Sunday School room. Please place your offering in the plates as you enter or exit the service.
- K. Restrict your movement before, during and after the service so that we limit our contact with each other.
- L. At the conclusion of the service, Vicar Leister will dismiss the congregation from the rear, by rows, to reduce personal contact.

PART 5: LAVATORY PROCEDURE

- A. Please use the lavatories off the rear of the adult Sunday school area ONLY.
- B. Please limit restroom usage to emergencies only as well as one adult (or adult and your child) at a time.
- C. Gloves and disinfecting wipes will be provided for your use on surfaces you have touched following each lavatory visit. Dispose of them properly and finish by washing your hands.

PART 6: BUILDING USE

- A. Messiah Lutheran Church Group meetings are restricted to twenty-five or less until further notice.
- B. There will be no choir rehearsals until further notice.
- C. No outside group meetings will be held until further notice.
- D. The new HVAC System is up and running. It is filtered for viruses and will be programmed to turn on and off remotely. There are both heating and air conditioning features for all areas of the church and fellowship hall.

These changes are ones that are new to us – all of us. We are erring on the side of love for our neighbors. Patience, grace, and flexibility will be necessary as we strive to make the most appropriate decisions for the people of God at Messiah at this time.

In God's service,
Messiah PPC