

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

\*\* This plan is prepared based on recommendations and requirements from the MN Department of Health for Faith-based communities, last updated 7-22-20. More information can be found at

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html#comm>

## STAFF PROTOCOLS

1. Messiah's Office Manager is the primary staff person in the church building M-F. The Communications Specialist does as much work from home as possible, coming into church as necessary and providing advanced notice to the Office Manager due to shared office space.
2. Pastoral staff maintain office space on opposite end of the building from the main office; they work from home as is reasonable.
3. All staff have been "assigned" restroom space. Staff wash hands regularly following MDH guidelines. Tissues, sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer are available and found in public areas.
4. A 6 foot distance between staff is maintained at all times. Disinfecting of work areas, copier, etc. is completed as needed. Masks are worn when staff are not in individual offices.
5. As of 6-1-20, staff meetings have moved from Zoom meetings to Zoom/in-person with continued distancing of 6 feet or more and held outside as weather permits. (Masking when indoors.)
6. The church building is generally locked. When interacting with congregational members or other public who come into the building staff maintain social distance requirements and wear masks. This protocol is also in place for all deliveries.
7. Any staff person exhibiting signs of COVID-19 will not report to work/be sent home immediately. Testing will occur as soon as possible, and results reported to Lead Pastor (or to the Office Manager if Lead Pastor shows symptoms of illness). Communication to others regarding any potential exposure will occur per MDH guidelines.
8. All staff will follow MDH guidelines for staying home/returning to work as outlined here: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf>

## CLEANING PROTOCOLS

1. Disinfecting of bathrooms, copier, table tops, door handles, light switches and any other high touch areas will occur several times each week.
2. Cleaning materials are obtained from Red Feather and meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.

3. Microphones are labeled for musicians/pastoral staff and not shared. Phones are not shared. Any person using a phone in a communal space (kitchen, work room) will sanitize immediately after use.
4. If a staff member or visitor becomes ill, sanitizing and cleaning guidelines as outlined will be followed: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
5. Communion Ware: Pre-packaged, disposable communion cups will be used. Packages are placed in serving trays 48 hours or more before a service. Hand sanitizer and gloves are used during distribution, prior to the start of a service.
6. Paper bulletins are available at outdoor worship on a limited basis and not reused.

### COMMUNICATION

1. All staff will be trained on COVID-19 protocols. A copy of this preparedness plan will be available on the web site at <https://www.messiahnorthmankato.com/>. Ongoing information will be communicated to all members via newsletter, email, social media and other communication channels as necessary.
2. Signage for all visitors and users of the building will be in place prior to building utilization. This includes floor markings where appropriate, signage for disinfecting in the bathroom, near the drinking fountain, and alerts to visitors to leave the premises if they feel sick or exhibit any Covid-19 symptoms.

### WORSHIP PROTOCOLS

Until further notice, all regularly scheduled worship services will be held outside. Guidelines for outdoor worship are as follows:

Outdoor worship services will be held at 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM in the East Parking Lot (off LoRay Drive) and church lawn (Corner of LoRay and Lee)

1. For people who wish to worship from their parked cars, the following guidelines are in place:
  - a. Enter at the northernmost entrance of the lot. Stop at the station to leave your offering and pick up your elements for Holy Communion – the small package will be sitting in communion trays and includes both juice and wafer – one for each person in your vehicle. (Holy Communion will be offered the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month).
  - b. Have hand sanitizer in your vehicle to sanitize hands after picking up the communion elements.

- c. Proceed to the handicapped parking spaces at the southern end of the lot, closest to the lawn. Follow instructions for parking. Vehicles need to be 6 feet apart. Windows can be rolled down if the 6 foot distance is maintained.
  - d. Tune your radio to 88.7 FM. Our backup frequency will be 90.1 FM if we are having trouble. There will also be a sound system on the lawn that may also be adequate for your needs regarding sound.
  - e. MN Department of Health guidelines indicate social distancing is best practiced by staying in your car. Only members of a household should travel together in their car.
  - f. Masks are not required if you stay in your car.
2. For people who wish to worship on the lawn area, the following guidelines are in place:
  - a. Please park in the west parking lot and walk around the church. Parking in the back of the east lot is also an option; those with mobility issues should park where it is convenient for them.
  - b. Stop at the stations located in the parking lot or on the lawn to give your offering and to pick up communion elements, as applicable. Hand sanitizer will be available at the station as well.
  - c. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket.
  - d. Wear a mask. Additional masks will be available at the outdoor station if you do not have one or forget to bring yours. Keep this mask with you after the service.
  - e. Observe the physical distancing markers on the lawn. Family/household groups may sit closer than 6 feet; otherwise, a minimum distance of 6 feet apart is to be observed at all times.
3. If you are sick, please stay home. If you are in a high risk category, we encourage you to stay home as well. Keep reading for more options for you to worship with us!
4. We will broadcast the 8:30 worship service on Facebook Live. You can access this video from your own FB page, or from the Messiah web site at <https://www.messiahnorthmankato.com/>
5. You can also find the service after it has been posted on the web site itself – click on the “video sermons tab” or “You Tube” on the home page for all of our services. The most recent service is often posted by late Sunday morning, but it will be posted by Monday at the latest.
6. In case of rain – we will have a FB Live service at 8:30 AM and a Zoom worship service at 10:00 AM. REMEMBER – the Zoom worship happens ONLY if the parking lot service is rained out.

SPECIAL SERVICES (INCLUDES FUNERALS, WEDDINGS)

1. As of 6-10-20, attendance at any indoor service will be limited to 80 people or less. This does not include musicians and worship leaders. Seating has been rearranged to accommodate this number in an appropriate manner.
2. If necessary, a sign-up system will be implemented to ensure that the number attending does not exceed 80.
3. There will be no paper bulletins. Hymnals and Bibles have been removed from sanctuary until further notice.
4. All doors in the back of the sanctuary, including the “windows”, will be open for greater air circulation.
5. Ushers or funeral home staff will direct people to sit in such a way as to maintain minimum 6 foot distance. Family groups will be allowed to sit together; however, all other attendees will need to maintain a minimum 6 foot distance.
6. Instrumental music may be a part of the service. There will be no more than one vocalist during a worship, and this person must maintain no less than a 12 foot distance from the nearest attendee and wear a mask as much as possible. There will be no congregational singing. Responsive readings will be kept to a minimum.
7. For both regular and special worship services the number of speakers or vocalists should be kept to a minimum (indoors or outside). Microphones should be limited to one person per microphone whenever possible. If a microphone must be shared, it will be cleaned with disinfectant cloths between users.
8. All attendees will wear masks. Additional masks will be available for those who do not have one. Hand sanitizer is available at the entrances to the sanctuary.
9. If, as part of the service there will be a processional and/or recessional, center aisle only will be used, and no one will be seated in the chair closest to the aisle.
10. Offering baskets will be available in the narthex area; no offering plates will be passed from person to person. Communion protocols will be the same as used during outdoor worship (see above). There will be no “Sharing God’s Peace” involving physical touch.
11. Funeral visitations – visitation with family will occur in front of church, with those coming to pay respects using the center aisle. Distances of 6 feet will be marked on the floor, and those remaining for the funeral service are encouraged to be seated after visiting with the family.
12. The narthex area should be used for “traveling” to and from the service or visitation only.
13. After the service all chairs will be sprayed with disinfectant. Poles along the aisle, podium, light switches and any other areas used will be wiped with disinfectant cloths before the sanctuary is used again.
14. Any time of fellowship before or after a worship service must be planned in advance to ensure physical distancing guidelines can be met at all times. There can be no communal sharing of food. Sack or box lunches for people to pick-up and consume could be a possibility.

## OTHER MEETINGS

1. Small groups may meet inside the building with the following limitations in place:
  - a. Physical distancing guidelines of 6 or more feet are to be observed among all non-family participants. Masks are to be worn.
  - b. In the gathering place, a group of 25 or less can meet. In any area of the building outside the sanctuary or gathering place the group size is limited to 10 or less. Sunday School rooms in the Education Wing can be used to accommodate 10 or less Sunday School students, but for other purposes the group must be small enough that the 6 feet space can be observed among all participants.
  - c. There will be no communal sharing of food.
  - d. After the meeting disinfecting guidelines will include wiping down tables and chairs, light switches, door knobs, cleaning the bathroom and any other high touch areas. Responsibility for disinfecting will be determined prior to the meeting being scheduled.
2. There may be multiple groups in the building at the same time for Sunday School or Middle School programs ONLY. To the greatest extent possible, any multiple groups will not share space.
3. Groups meeting outside the building should also observe the physical distancing requirement of 6 or more feet between participants not of the same family group. Group size outside is not limited to a specific number but instead will be limited based on the function of the meeting, ability to hear one another in the open space, and other natural limitations. Masks are encouraged but not required outside, as long as the physical distancing rules are observed.
4. Groups are encouraged to meet outside whenever possible.

Approved by Messiah Council 6-14-20, effective immediately  
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