

**Indoor Worship Protocol
Redeemer Lutheran Church**

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Indoor Worship Protocol

Redeemer Lutheran Church

Safety protocols have been developed to comply with governmental regulations and recommendations in an attempt to minimize the chances of anyone contracting the COVID-19 virus at our services. We have considered issues of reverence, sanitation, social distancing, and amount of time spent in the church as we developed these protocols. It is important to recognize that *all* of us must follow *all* of the steps outlined in order to truly minimize the risk to ourselves, our fellow congregation members, and the members of our community. These protocols will be reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed.

General Guidelines for Your Safety

It is expected that our staff, congregation members and visitors follow current general CDC guidelines “How to protect yourself and others”:

- Clean hands frequently
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth
- Avoid close contact with others
- Stay at home if ill
- Cover mouth and nose with cloth face cover when around others
- Cover cough and sneeze
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily

We have developed specific policies related to these general guidelines for worship at Redeemer including the following:

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers are instructed to wash their hands frequently (soap, water, and/or hand sanitizer), cover their coughs and sneezes, and maintain 6 feet of social distance between themselves and anyone who is not of their household.

Staff or volunteers who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 may not come to church until their quarantine period has ended.

Staff and volunteers will stay home if they are ill, or if someone in their household is ill, including showing any symptoms of COVID-19. If they develop COVID-19 symptoms while at the church they will be sent home immediately.

Cleaning:

Office, restrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, and frequently touched surfaces (pews, railings, doors and door handles, etc.) will be routinely cleaned and sanitized. This includes all areas of the church used before, during and after services.

Hand sanitizer:

Hand sanitizer and tissues are available throughout the church building but we request you bring your own if possible. ***Please sanitize your hands on your way into the building and on your way out.*** Signs will be posted at each facility entrance and at various locations within the facility.

Masks:

Out of love and care for our fellow congregation members and worship participants and to respect our local leaders, Redeemer is requiring that a face mask be worn when inside our church. Exemptions are for children under two years of age and those with a medical condition that precludes use. If you do not have one, the church will provide a cloth face mask which you will then have the responsibility for its proper care, cleaning and reuse.

Restrooms:

Please refrain from using the restrooms unless there is an urgent need. The number of people in the restroom at one time will be limited to TWO. Maintain 6 feet of social distance outside of the restroom when waiting. Please use hand sanitizer before entering and after leaving the bathroom. To make sure bathrooms are not a gathering space for students, there will be a volunteer bathroom monitor outside of bathrooms.

Capacity and Overflow:

The stated capacity of our sanctuary and chapel is 435 people. State guidelines as of June 10, 2020, limit us to 50% of our capacity, or up to 217 people per service. However, social distancing requirements may mean that our actual capacity is closer to 140, depending on the size of the family units attending. This has required us to close off every other pew in the sanctuary and remove chairs from the chapel.

Overflow seating on Sunday mornings will be in the South Fellowship Hall where the service will be viewed on television screens. Ushers will direct you to the appropriate stairwell or elevator to access the Fellowship Hall. Households may move chairs together; however spacing between households should be at least six feet.

Hymnals and Bibles:

Hymnals, Bibles, prayer card, and other materials have been removed from the pews for the time being. As in the past, we will project the entire order of service on the screen.

Before Arriving for Worship

Screen yourself and all family members for symptoms of COVID-19 and please do not attend if anyone in your household has any of these symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Fever of 100F (37.8C) or greater

In addition, if anyone in your household is ill, has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or suspected of having COVID-19 in the last 14 days or may have been in contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or if they are showing any symptoms of COVID-19, we would ask that you all stay home. If students become ill while at the church, parents will be contacted and asked to take the student home or to a medical facility immediately. ***If in doubt about you or your child's health, please stay home.***

Please know the risks and choose wisely and appropriately whether or not you ought to attend services. Persons over 65 and those with underlying health conditions (such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, etc.) are at greater risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. Worship services will continue to be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube for those who choose to stay home.

Arriving for Worship

We would ask that you plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes prior to the start of the service. This will give us all time to avoid congestion in the narthex, get seated comfortably under the new rules of social distancing, and reflect and rejoice on our opportunity to worship together again.

Wear your name tags! We may not recognize each other with our masks! To minimize congestion at the name boards, we encourage you to take your name tag with you when you leave but keep them handy to wear at each service you attend.

Please enter the church through the main doors only (from the parking lot). We will try to provide touchless entry. Doors will be propped open when appropriate, or held open by a greeter, elder or usher. Access through the 7th Avenue door (Door #3) will be reserved for those with special needs. The office door (Door #2) will be locked.

Masks are required. If you do not have one, a cloth mask will be provided to you which you will then have the responsibility for its proper care, cleaning and reuse.

Hand sanitizer will be available near entrances to the building and sanctuary. Worshipers are asked to use either their own hand sanitizer or that available at the church when entering **and** leaving the building.

Please do not shake hands, hug, or touch people in greeting before or after the service. Do your best to maintain social distancing. Please do not congregate in the narthex, stairs, or walkways, but proceed immediately to the sanctuary.

An usher or elder will direct you to a specific pew or chair. This is to maximize the number of people in the sanctuary and chapel while maintaining social distancing requirements. If there is a line forming for being ushered in, please be patient and try to maintain 6 feet of social distance from the household in front of you.

If you are directed to the Fellowship Hall and need to use the elevator, please limit the number of people in the elevator to 3 singles or 2 couples or one family group of 3 or more.

Bulletins and communion elements will be distributed by the ushers as you enter the sanctuary.

During Worship

Liturgy:

This service will be a pared down version of our livestream service giving us the opportunity to take Communion together. Initially, Communion will be offered at every service to give everyone an opportunity to partake given the limits on attendance at each service. As we begin the indoor worship schedule, this will be approximately a 30 minute service, expanding as we feel able to do so. The congregation will participate in liturgy responses and prayers while wearing your mask.

Singing:

The current medical evidence suggests that congregational singing indoors could increase the risk of spreading the virus; thus, for now, congregational singing will be minimized. Music will be provided by individual or small group ensembles and/or a cantor. As more scientific

evidence becomes available, we pray that we will be able to introduce more congregational singing into our worship services.

Children's Message:

The Children's Message will still continue and we cannot wait to have children in our building again! These will be done at each service. We will have children stand and stay in the pew with their family during the Children's Message.

Offering:

We will not pass the offering plate during the service. There will be houses in the narthex by both entrances to the sanctuary marked "Offering" where you can place your offering upon entering the sanctuary or as you leave.

Friendship Pads:

We will no longer keep the friendship pads in the pews to sign in. Instead, you will receive a "Connect Card" from the ushers when you enter the sanctuary. Please fill this out and place it in the empty pew rack in front of you during in the service. Every time! Signing in is a great way to help our pastors and elders care for our congregation. This has always been a good tool for spiritual care. During this pandemic, having a record of who attended worship is important for other communication purposes as well.

Communion:

Communion, when offered, will be done as a family of believers. You will be able to pick up individually packaged Communion elements as you enter the sanctuary. We will all take the Lord's Supper at the exact same time as directed by the Pastor during the worship service. What a great picture of our unity! If you are unable to open the individual packaged Communion elements please let an usher know and they will bring an open one to you in your pew. Dispose of the empty Communion ware in the receptacle located in the pew's hymn book rack.

Our Children:

There will be no drop off nursery available for now. If you feel the need to take your children out of the sanctuary during worship, the narthex and Room 101 (adjacent to the nursery) will be available. For all, we ask that extra grace and care are given to children and their families. Remember, children in our sanctuary are a REALLY good thing! Let us encourage their presence even if they are antsy and having a hard time with their masks.

After Worship

Please remain seated after the worship service. The ushers will direct you on how to exit the sanctuary. This is to avoid congestion and maintain social distancing.

The pastors will take the opportunity to ***briefly*** greet worshipers in the narthex or outside after most services. Please do not shake hands, hug, or touch people in greeting after the service. Do your best to maintain social distancing. Please do not congregate in the narthex, stairs, or walkways, but proceed immediately outside to greet one another at a safe distance.