

Redeemer Covid-19 Preparedness Plan

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DALE, LOWELL C., M.D.

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The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Redeemer Lutheran Church¹

Introduction

Redeemer Lutheran Church is committed to reopen for the Sacraments, Worship, Bible Study and Ministry in a way that will provide a safe and healthy environment that best meets the needs of our staff, our family of believers, and our community. To ensure that, we, the Transition Team of Redeemer Lutheran Church, under the guiding scripture of Colossians 3:12-14 and Philippians 2:3-4, have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Transition Team members are responsible for implementing this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan; and with our staff, congregation members, and visitors are responsible for complying with all aspects of the plan. The designated Plan Administrator, Lowell Dale (lcdale1953@gmail.com; 507-421-4059) will supervise the evaluation, monitoring, execution and updating of the Preparedness Plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our staff, congregation members and visitors. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our congregation and staff.

All of the members of our staff are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and keeping our staff actively carrying out the mission of Redeemer Lutheran Church. Staff involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our staff in this process with regular updates and discussions as well as review and feedback from them regarding this plan. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and Executive Order 20-48, and addresses:

- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- Engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- Visitor controls and protections for drop-off, pick-up and delivery;
- Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Communications and training that will be provided to the staff; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

(Appendix A)

Our staff are at low to medium hazard risk as defined by OSHA, and our Plan is based on these hazard designations:

Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In areas where there *is* ongoing community transmission, workers in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, high-population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings).

Lower exposure risk (caution) jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 nor frequent close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) the general public. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

¹ Per Minnesota Department of Health Guidelines

(see : <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/hazardrecognition.html>;
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/environmental-services.html>)

It is expected that our staff, congregation members and visitors will follow current general CDC guidelines “How to protect yourself and others”: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention-H.pdf>

- 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

The Plan outlined below provides additional guidance to further protect our staff, our congregation members, and our visitors (includes non-congregation members, community members utilizing our facility, vendors, delivery persons, etc.). All church related groups and activities are expected to establish policies addressing the safe resumption of their activities. Those policies and protocols in Appendix B will be reviewed and approved by the Transition Team and will be in compliance with the Preparedness Plan prior to resumption of those groups or activities.

Note that this document will remain a work in progress. Guidelines related to COVID-19 change frequently as more is known about transmission of the virus and its prevalence in our community. We can expect the plan will change over time in response as well. The Preparedness plan will be reviewed periodically (at least a minimum of once a year or as needed).

Health Screening and Illness Policies for Staff

Health screening protocols and illness policies have been developed for staff. This includes criteria on when they may return to work after illness and expanded sick leave and extended leave of absence policies. **(Appendix B)**

Health Screening and Illness Policy for Congregation Members and Visitors

To enhance the safety of our congregation members, staff and visitors, all will be asked to complete a self-assessed health screening prior to entering the facility for any activity. **(Appendix B)**

Handwashing

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at all times. Staff are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their work day, prior to and after any mealtimes and after using the toilet. All congregation members and visitors to the facility will be asked to wash their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) will be available that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Necessary hand washing and/or sanitizer facilities will be provided, supplied and maintained: Each staff member will be provided with a personal hand sanitizer dispenser for use in their offices. Congregation members are encouraged to bring their own supply of hand sanitizer with them. In addition, dispensers will be available at each entry, at the main office desk and at various locations throughout the facility for general use. Staff are responsible for requesting refills of their dispensers as needed. The custodian will be responsible for maintaining general use dispensers.

Hand hygiene will be strongly encouraged after any face-to-face interactions: Staff, congregation members, and other visitors should wash their hands immediately after any interaction, either with soap and water or with approved hand-sanitizer.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Staff, congregation members, and other visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.

Respiratory etiquette: Masks

Staff are encouraged to wear cloth face masks when outside of their office or whenever interacting face-to-face with others. All congregation members and visitors over the age of two years will be required to wear a face mask when within the facility unless a medical condition prohibits use. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all staff and visitors. Individual cloth masks will be available for those without. Signs will be posted at each facility entrance and at various locations within the facility.

Social distancing

Social distancing is being implemented in the workplace through the following controls: Telework, flexible work hours, and staggered office hours to reduce the number of staff in the workplace at one time have been implemented and will be adjusted over time as social distancing guidelines are updated. **(Appendix B: Working from Home policy, 4/22/2020).**

Staff will assemble together for worship practice, live stream service and congregational services when resumed. All other meetings will be done with Zoom or similar meeting software until restrictions on larger gatherings are eased. Whenever together the staff is to practice social distancing and stay 6 feet

apart (as much as possible). A policy has been developed and implemented that details how the office will function within the constraints of the plan (**Appendix B: Policy for Opening the Office**)

Deliveries of packages and mail are to be left outside of the office door and any communication with the office will be accomplished through the glass window. Packages should be opened using disposable gloves and packaging materials immediately disposed of. Hands should be then thoroughly washed with soap and water or hand-sanitizer.

Protective supplies

Individual hand-sanitizer dispensers will be provided to each staff member with additional dispensers distributed throughout the facility. Disposable gloves will be provided and kept at key locations for use as needed. Disposable tissue will be provided to each staff member and additional boxes of tissue distributed throughout the facility. Staff will be responsible for providing and care of their own cloth face masks, although the church will have a limited number of cloth face masks available if needed. All congregation members and visitors in the facility will be requested to wear a face mask. If they do not have one, the church will provide a cloth face mask which the congregation member/visitor will then have the responsibility for its proper care, cleaning and reuse.

Physical changes in the workplace and shared facility space

Staff will work primarily in their offices or from home. Congregation members and visitors will be asked to communicate through the office glass windows and enter the office only if necessary, to carry out their business.

Worship space and other shared areas will be adjusted to limit number of occupants to no more than recommended by the current Minnesota Department of Health guidelines and/or maintain social distance of at least 6 feet between households. (**Appendix C: List of rooms and capacity**)

Visitor interactions will be safely conducted:

Congregation member and visitor access will be restricted as defined by the current Minnesota Department of Health guidelines. Policies related to the office and adjacent areas have been or will be established. (**Appendix B: Policy for Opening the Office**)

Specific policies for maintaining social distancing and other safety measures when attending worship services, funerals, weddings and other church activities will be developed and implemented upon approval of the Transition Team (**Appendix B--TBD**). Individual staff will maintain a log of significant interactions (>15 minutes) with congregation members and visitors, groups will be encouraged to maintain logs of participants for contact tracing.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, and areas in the work environment, including

restrooms, break rooms, meeting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc.

Staff are asked not to use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them **before** and **after** use. Disposable wipes will be available so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees **before** and **after** each use.

Sanitation schedule and checklists for documentation will be established for each area and activity within the church building. This will include identifying surfaces/equipment to be sanitized, the agent to be used, and the frequency at which sanitation occurs; and will be described within the policy/protocol for each activity held in the church).

Routine cleaning and disinfection schedule and checklist of the workspace during the workweek will also be established. This will include the following:

- High touch areas such as door knobs, light switches and bathrooms should be routinely cleaned twice a day by the custodian and as needed if soiled. Adherence to the cleaning schedule will be documented via a posted schedule of cleaning time and initials in each bathroom and other public areas as appropriate.
(Appendix C: Example: ServiceMaster Covid-19 High Touch Cleaning Checklist)
- The main Office desk will be cleaned daily by the custodian and as felt necessary after interactions with visitors or congregation members by the secretary or other staff member. Documentation of this cleaning, including time and initials, will be available for review.
- Staff will be responsible for cleaning shared equipment such as copy machines and fax machines **before** and **after** use with appropriate supplied cleaning materials
- Staff will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their offices as needed, especially if used to meet with others

Products used to clean the workplace: Any appropriate EPA cleaner as identified at their website:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Disinfecting the workplace if staff, congregation member or visitor is diagnosed with COVID-19

- An isolation room, designated as the “Care Room” is located adjacent to the office and will be used to isolate ill children or adults until they can be safely taken home or to a medical facility. Appropriate PPE (mask, face shield, gloves) will be available to any person attending the ill.
- Close off areas visited by the ill persons. If possible, open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Custodian will clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment (like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If it has been more than 7 days since the person with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

Building and Ventilation

Assessment of the general state of the building and ventilation system will be performed and documented. (**Appendix C: Document--TBD**)

Protocols to address guideline recommendations and maintain safe day-to-day operation of the ventilation system will be established. (**Appendix B--TBD**)

Communications plans

- **Staff concerns:** The administrative pastor will be accessible to all staff members who have questions or concerns related to the Plan or its implementation. Redeemer Personnel and Staffing Committee members will also be available to staff and the administrative pastor for consultation as needed
- **Staff Updates:** Weekly updates on progress or changes to the plan will be provided to the staff at their regular meeting. More urgent updates will be provided in person and/or via email.
- **Congregation members:** Communication to the congregation members at large will be through the various established communication platforms. Information may include the following:
 - Education on steps being taken for protection of staff and congregation members
 - Policies and protocols so members are aware of expectations
- **Visitors, community members utilizing church space, special event participants (e.g. weddings and funerals):** Specific policies will be established and communication plans developed that inform regarding compliance to our Preparedness Plan. (**Appendix B--TBD**)
- **Provide signage or instructions for staff, congregation members and visitors, including:**
 - **Handwashing:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/wash/fsgermbuster.html>
 - **Cover your cough:** <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/cycpgeneng.pdf>
 - **Stop the Spread:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/preventsymp.pdf>

Training

This Preparedness Plan was communicated in writing and to all staff at the staff meeting of May 12, 2020. Additional communication and training will be ongoing through further review of the Plan documents and as a regular agenda item for the regularly scheduled staff meetings.

All church leadership and volunteers (including greeters, ushers, childcare, etc.) will be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure, as well as applicable policies, procedures, practices, and protocols. **(Appendix C: Documentation of Training—TBD)**

The Preparedness Plan will be posted in easily accessible locations throughout the facility and on the Redeemer Lutheran Church website for review by leadership, congregation members and visitors.

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by **Redeemer Lutheran Church council** and will be posted throughout the workplace and the website upon approval of the church council. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by: Grant Wilson

Title: President, Church Council

Date: November 21, 2020