
Re-opening our Church Building: A Phased Approach



JUNE 2, 2021

Holy Communion Lutheran Church
Authored by: The Leaders of HCLC



Trusting in God, but Listening to the Science

About this document

The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic has changed much of the behaviors and rhythms in our lives, including how we worship together. This formulated ministry plan considers some of the larger questions of how we come back together and how we continue to be accessible to those vulnerable populations who cannot return to in-person gatherings during the pandemic. There's a lot of hard and holy work that goes into such a phased-in plan because we must ensure that we have proper risk-management in place for everyone's safety. **Until there is a vaccine for this virus (and inclusive distribution of that vaccine for all), worship (like all of our daily activities) will have some risks.**

Before the pandemic, our primary worship was in-person and online was a secondary form of worship. **We must now reverse our thinking of the two.** This shall be our goal until a vaccine is available: to continue online worship as our primary way of worshipping. *There is no recommendation we can make, aside from "nothing in person, no one in building until a vaccine" that is without risk.* We ask that you, too, discern the risks that you are willing to make.

This ministry plan has been carefully crafted using CDC and state guidelines, local synod and churchwide guidelines, as well as consultation from the work of other denominations. A list of those resources appear on the final pages of this document. When ambiguity existed between these guidelines, we exercised caution and followed the stricter rule, whenever appropriate.

Please understand that this ministry plan is not linear: as science cautions us to expect another influx of Covid-19 cases, we may have to nimbly adapt. Take heart.

COVID-19 RISK LEVELS		tinyurl.com/c19risk
9	• Bars • Big concerts	• Sports stadiums
8	• Gyms • Amusement parks	• Churches • Buffets
7	• Playing basketball • Public pools	• Schools
6	• Casinos • Restaurants – indoor • Playgrounds	• Hair salons, barbershops • Pontoon boat rides • Movie theaters
5	• Home dinner parties • Airplanes • Backyard barbecues	• Malls • Beaches • Bowling
4	• Dentist offices • Walking in busy downtown • Offices	• Doctor waiting rooms • Restaurants – outdoor
3	• Grocery stores • Camping • Hotels	• Golfing • Libraries, museums
2	• Walk, run, or bike with others	• Get car gasoline
1	• Restaurants – takeout	• Tennis

Dr. Matthew Sims, Dr. Dennis Cunningham, Dr. Mimi Emig, Dr. Nasir Husain. Based on risk factors including inside/outside, nearness to others, exposure time, compliance likelihood, and personal risk.

Finally, these general guidelines apply at every level:

- **Online Streaming Worship and Phone Church will stay enacted at every phase level.** As we progress in each phase, the worship team may expand/add worship opportunities
- Stay at home if you are sick and self-quarantine if you think you may have been exposed to someone with Covid-19.
- Stay home if you are considered “a vulnerable population.” (See CDC recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>)
- We will limit gatherings according to guidance provided by denominations, state, or local authorities.
- Use face masks at all times while in worship.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.
- **Reduce exposure time in worship and fellowship gatherings.**
- Limit physical touching, even concerning Christian rituals.

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- Avoid practices known to spread the virus more widely, such as congregational or choral singing, unison speaking, speaking loudly, shouting, and playing wind and brass instruments.

Stay-at-home Quarantine (During Quickly-Rising Cases, Widespread Infection, Government Mandated Orders):

- In this phase, we are an online-only Community. The church building is closed and church events specifically held in the building are cancelled. This includes outside groups who utilize our building. Some activities like fellowship groups, prayer vespers, and pastoral office hours are held “virtually.” Those urgent/time sensitive pastoral care visits will only be conducted by telephone or by virtual meeting.
- Council and various “deacons” reach out to all members through phone/text.
- Building only used by staff, cleaning company, and those tending to essential, operational duties; staff work remotely as needed.
- No weddings or funerals in the building. Graveside services shall be a private, family-led graveside service. Your pastors are available by phone and can provide you suggestions for liturgy. A celebration of life at our church will be held when normal activities can be resumed.

Delayed Opening (Phase One)

Once Governor and Local Authorities confirm 14 consecutive days of decreased new cases and hospitalizations

Because more than 1/3 of our church population is deemed as vulnerable population—we would continue online worship (as we have been doing) for the next several weeks. The building will remain closed for in-person worship until we can further evaluate the impact of the virus in the community given the lifting of these stay-at-home restrictions. All church activities remain cancelled and functions of the pastoral office are still limited and/or modified. *Nota Bene: during Phase One, a musical director may be added to live-stream worship to enhance the service through songful meditation. This musical director will be amply distanced from the other worship leaders.*

Enacting Phone Church

We gather as one body, with varying capabilities and gifts. The church is quite unique in this way, as we also are a body that span generations. We understand that many members may be limited in accessing the technological resources offered through online worship and other means of staying connected while we are physically apart. To ensure their care, we have developed “Call for Church,” a 24/7 telephone service for recorded prayers, songs, hymns, announcements, and sermons. Our current offering is:

Press 1: For the Hymn/Song to Put a Song in Your Heart

Press 2: For the Gospel/Sermon

Press 3: For a Prayerful Meditation

Press 4: For Important Announcements

Virtual Extension of our Live-Stream Worship

God made us communal beings, so being confined during a pandemic is not “normal” to our created nature. Feeling isolated or limited can stir up spiritual, emotional, and mental havoc individually, but—corporally—can also have negative effects on the body of Christ. During Phase One, we may offer time to virtually gather in a space outside the dedicated time of live-streamed worship, either before or after, via Zoom. We will also offer evening prayer (called *Vespers*) to lift up our prayer concerns and share in fellowship afterward.

Limited, Outdoor Gatherings (Phase Two)

During Phase Two—at a time determined as appropriate by church leaders and in synchronicity with the state relaxing guidelines—we may institute limited, outdoor worship gatherings. These gatherings will be in addition to online worship (which will then include an “at-home” communion liturgy). We will need to comply with state mandates that may be in effect to limit attendance. According to guidance from Maryland State Police no vehicle may contain more than 10 persons. *In order to aid in tracing in the event of Covid-19 exposure, people will need to reserve their space for attendance by signing up in advance. This includes worship leaders and parking lot ushers.*

Because our service of worship are public events and not restricted only to our own members, these worship services will be brief and may be offered more frequently to accommodate more people safely.

Drive-In Church: Metrics for Safety

Attendees must remain in their car at all times, given the potential of breaching physical spaces with communion, offering and exchanging aerosols while singing (see page two for the risks of worship). The worship leaders will broadcast using a low FM transmission and the attendees will tune their car radios to the designated channel for the service. The restrooms are not for public use, unless in extreme emergencies. **Offering** will be deposited by attendees as they leave the church parking lot in a designated, drop-box area or may be collected using our specialized offering baskets with a 6-foot extension handle. We strongly encourage online giving to minimize physical handling. **The sacrament of Holy Communion may be** distributed by a (gloved and masked) parking lot usher, using individual, disposable communion cups upon the attendee’s entrance to the campus. If this option is not ecologically viable (given the disposable nature), then it is suggested that Holy Communion be a “BYOB” (or Bring Your Own Bread/Wine) event. Of course, we are sensitive to always be inclusive—so if someone “forgets” or “happens” upon our service—a prepackaged sacrament (prepared with proper precautions of a mask and gloves) will be made available. In either case, the attendee will, at the prescribed appropriate time, partake in the sacrament and take care in responsibly disposing/recycling of the empty container.

Worship Leaders will be limited to pastor, assisting minister or vicar, four parking lot ushers, and a limited number of music leaders (at the discretion of the Director of Music Ministries and contingent upon space, and state/local limitations of group gatherings). Worship leaders will practice social distancing and, when engaging with attendees, will be masked.

The worship service will be brief; an opening hymn/song, confessional prayer, one scriptural text, homily/sermon, passing of the peace by honking/flashing car's high beams/ring bells, sacrament, sending hymn/song, and a blessing. Further participation may be encouraged by:



At the conclusion of the worship service, only the worship leaders may enter the building to return sound equipment and other items from worship and to thoroughly clean and disinfect the contents. The parking lot ushers will sanitize the bathrooms using the proper safety precautions, in the event that they were used for emergency.

Metrics for Safety for Limited, Outdoor Fellowship Gatherings During Phase Two

In fair weather, the fellowship committee may authorize fellowship activities (which differs from worship, because it presents a different kind of risk: see page two graphic) to gather outside the building as long as they practice good social distancing. One way to encourage this is to map out “circles” of distance on our lawn. **The building and bathrooms are still closed**, so such gatherings would need to be brief and events would need to be coordinated with the church office.

Metrics for Safety for Graveside Committals During Phase Two

During this time, small, private graveside committals will resume and shall conform to the state/local guidelines of limited attendance. A graveside committal is brief and consists of a prayer, a Scripture reading, and a blessing commending the deceased to their resting place. Giving the added difficulty of arranging a funeral/celebration of life service during a pandemic, the family is encouraged to hold a memorial service at a later time, when larger, in-person gatherings are permitted.

Metrics for Safety for Staff During Phase Two

During Phase Two, staff may return to the office as needed for essential operations, but in staggered schedules. Staff may also elect to continue to work from home. Bathrooms are for staff only. Visitors are

not allowed in the building and any interaction will be outside or at the church’s doors. Visitors and staff should be masked during this interaction. At the end of a staff members’ shift, they will disinfect their workspace according to the guidelines of the CDC (see below).

Limited, Outdoor Worship Gatherings “On the Lawn” (Phase 2.5)

In cooler weather (and before we return to limited, indoor worship in phase 3), the worship team may expand worship opportunities to include outdoor worship gatherings “on the lawn” at a place to be determined (but likely to be our outdoor worship space or in a park). This would also likely complement our Drive-In worship—and not replace Drive-In worship—to better accommodate varying risk tolerances among our church. In order to aid in tracing in the event of Covid-19 exposure, **attendees** are also required to complete this mandatory attendance check-in before their arrival:

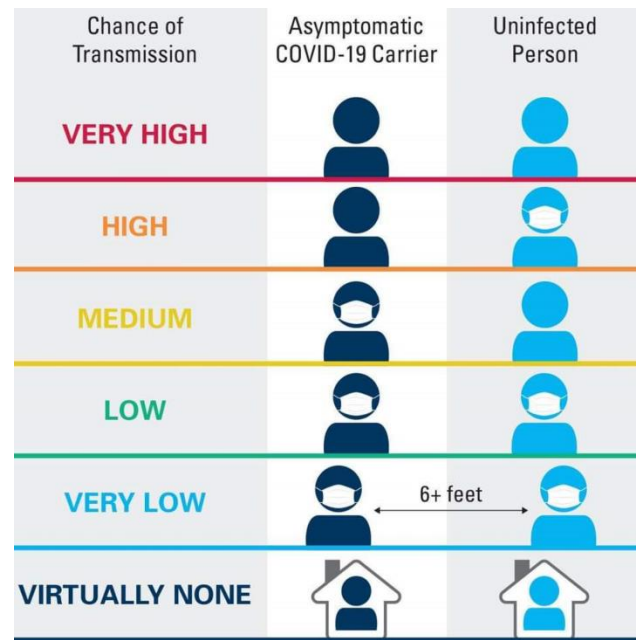
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScv5tc7KMRgha8h-V6eCB7frP9cFNrnRg0qjWpYVa5ZqOSuTg/viewform?usp=pp_url

Limited, Outdoor Worship Gatherings “On the Lawn”: Metrics for Safety

Attendees must maintain proper social distancing and wear a mask. One way to encourage this is to map out “circles” of distance on our lawn. We will adhere to state and local guidelines for attendance. Foot-traffic should be directed **away** from the building and an usher should monitor the entry ways when people access the bathroom, to ensure that no crowding occurs.

The restrooms would be available for public use and will be considered single-use due to the restrictions in the size of our restrooms. **Offering** will be deposited by attendees as they leave the church parking lot in a designated, drop-box area or may be collected using our specialized offering baskets with a 6-foot extension handle. We strongly encourage online giving to minimize physical handling. **The sacrament of Holy**

Communion may be distributed by a (gloved and masked) parking lot usher, using individual, disposable communion cups upon the attendee’s entrance to the campus. If this option is not ecologically viable (given the disposable nature), then it is suggested that Holy Communion be a “BYOB” (or Bring Your Own Bread/Wine) event. Of course, we are sensitive to always be inclusive—so if someone “forgets” or “happens” upon our service—a prepackaged sacrament (prepared with proper precautions of a mask and gloves) will be made available. In either case, the attendee will, at the prescribed appropriate time, partake in the sacrament and take care in responsibly disposing/recycling of the empty container.



Worship Leaders will be limited to pastor, assisting minister or vicar, parking lot ushers, and a limited number of music leaders (at the discretion of the Director of Music Ministries and contingent upon space, and state/local limitations of group gatherings). Worship leaders will practice social distancing and, especially when engaging with attendees, will also be masked.

The worship service will be brief, to limit exposure time; an opening hymn/song, confessional prayer, one scriptural text, homily/sermon, passing of the peace in nontraditional ways, sacrament, sending hymn/song, and a blessing.

Limited Indoor Gathering (Phase Three)

First, an important note: Given the small space of our sanctuary and the distance needed between attendees and worship leaders, the Reopening Task Force was forced to look at more creative means to facilitate indoor, communal worship. Here's the challenge: our building can only facilitate no more than 22 to 39 socially distanced people for worship and this number includes worship leaders (please see the sanctuary map at the end of this document and note that this number varies on the number of people in a household sitting together and the space they occupy in a pew). This means that communal worship will take place at a larger venue, such as an ecumenical and larger, neighboring "sister" church like Fallston United Methodist, for example. This does not mean that our sanctuary is closed for all worship: the worship team may elect to add a smaller, special worship service outside of our Sunday live stream where attendance might normally be smaller anyway (think: weekday/week night service). Regardless of the time and space, the following protocols will be followed:

Critical Numbers

- 7 feet of social distance; 20 feet for cantors and worship leaders
- The virus can live on surfaces up to seven days
- Disinfectants may need 2-10 minutes of contact to be effective
- Symptoms typically show within 7-14 days

During Phase Three—and at a time determined as appropriate by church leaders—we will hold in-door gatherings that restrict attendance according to social distancing (note: 7 feet, as recommended in the Faith-Based Recommendations). We will also live-stream/record these gatherings, so that those who identify as vulnerable or “at-risk” populations as defined by the CDC, may also worship safely at-home. We emphasize this point again: Before the pandemic, our primary worship was in-person and online was a secondary form of worship. **We must now reverse our thinking of the two.** During this phase, and regardless of indoor worship, we plan to continue online worship as our primary way of worshipping. Given this reality, we intend to upgrade our camera equipment to enhance the online streaming experience for those who must stay home. This equipment upgrade will also make streaming more “portable” and we can effectively stream from any location.

Metrics for Safety for Limited, Indoor Gatherings

In preparation for these services, and regardless of where we gather for worship, all hymnals, pew cards, prayer cards, will be removed from the pews, to limit surfaces of physical contact. The liturgy and announcements will be projected on-screen. There will also be a designated, drop-off place for offering, although electronic giving will be strongly encouraged to limit physical contact to surfaces. Due to the limitations placed on attendance and required social distancing restrictions, individuals wishing to attend must sign up in advance, either online or by calling the church office. **In order to aid in tracing in the event of Covid-19 exposure, attendees are also required to complete this mandatory attendance check-in before their arrival:**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScv5tc7KMRgha8h-V6cCB7frP9cFNrnRg0qjWpYVa5ZqOSuTg/viewform?usp=pp_url

In anticipation of re-opening, we have installed several new sanitizing stations (both moveable and fixed) throughout the building near entrances, bathrooms, and any designated “drop-off” areas (e.g. for offering), and within seating areas in case anyone should cough or sneeze or otherwise need additional disinfecting during the service. Assistive Listening Devices will also be disinfected before each service. **Greeters and ushers** will be trained to help our attendees feel welcomed and provide important information. These worship assistants take on an even more important role as our church resumes indoor worship gatherings in a pandemic. Ushers and greeters may need to be trained to give effective and hospitable guidance regarding signage, seating, disinfection, and face coverings.

Both greeters and ushers should avoid using elevated voices to lessen the risk of virus transmission (even through cloth face coverings). Requiring cloth face coverings also opens up opportunities for creativity and service in the congregation: Our church quilting group and volunteers have made cloth face coverings to be given to individuals who do not have them. Ushers and greeters could have extras in individual bags to provide to members and visitors.

Before services. The worship area will be disinfected, including microphones and music stands. At entrances, doors will be propped open (weather permitting). The restrooms will also be disinfected and supplies will be replenished. Before entering the church building, **worship leaders and attendees** will need to be masked and remained masked during the service. Attendees will be directed by a (socially-distanced, masked) greeter/ usher to seat individuals or family units from the front to the back of the sanctuary (more room will be provided for families of moving, active children). Attendees will sit in these assigned, designated areas and should not venture into those areas that have been marked off to maintain proper social distancing between individuals/family units. All available seating for the congregations should provide at least 7 feet in all directions between co-sheltering households. In many cases, this will mean that at most 25% of available seating capacity can be used until state and local health officials advise it is safe for physical distancing to be somewhat relaxed.

Signs will be posted to inform and direct worshippers and guests to maintain social distancing, wear cloth face masks, obey entrances and exits (note: all shall enter through the church double doors and exit through the fellowship doors), how to wash and disinfect hands, and to limit the number of people in the bathroom to adhere to social distancing guidelines (the CDC provides signage and templates: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>).

During services. The beauty of our mystical God in our rich Lutheran traditions are fundamental for worship. It is especially important for us to consider that certain rites or traditions to worship this beautiful mystical relationship between us and God as a church might not be available to us for some time. Rather than focusing on what *cannot* be done, perhaps we might embrace the *new ways* in which we are invited to worship God (perhaps video, poetry, sculpture, painting, dance, fabric arts, and audio-visually).

Concerning these aspects of worship:

- Offering. See above (“In preparation for these services,”). We may also offer a text-giving option here, if possible.
- Passing of peace. Dr. Anthony Fauci has declared the handshake dead, but there are plenty of alternatives with zero touching and all of the intended warmth. Please check out some of those options here: <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/handshake-alternatives-gestures-around-world-trnd/index.html> During the passing of the peace, individual/family units are stay in their designated areas and not move around the sanctuary.
- Distribution of the Sacrament (Holy Communion). As suggested by the bishop, the sacrament of Holy Communion and baptism will be deferred for one month during this initial phase. This is to become aware of any ongoing improvements of this initial, indoor plan. An important note: the sacrament of Holy Communion involves brief breaches of physical distancing. Therefore, after this initial period, prepackaged communion will be provided for all attendees when they enter the sanctuary and attendees will partake the sacrament from their seats. Packaging materials shall be placed in a special trash recycling receptable upon leaving the sanctuary by the attendee.
- Baptisms. Baptism, like Holy Communion, requires physical closeness. To perform baptisms, the presider and worship assistants will wash/disinfect their hands before the rite and immediately after. The parent/caregiver/sponsor will hold an infant during the entire time and the presider will speak at a low volume and will be masked. Anointing oil will be poured into a separate dish and that excess will be disposed properly.
- Singing. We will refrain from congregational singing. Allow cantor 20 feet of distance (congregational response will be a hum, clap, employ sign language or using your entire body for worship). Limit the size of ensembles (4 or fewer) and maintain 7 feet of distance between performers with face coverings on.
- Youth activities/Sunday School activities will not be available in-person, but an alternative (virtually or otherwise) will be provided. However, these changes in worship’s format and practices may provide rich opportunities for children to be better integrated and participate in worship.
- Nursery. The nursery will have a delayed opening, so initially the nursery will be closed. Once available, the nursery will be limited to one family at a time, given the small space. After that family leaves, they will need to disinfect all surface areas and toys (this means that we will limit the toys available, have one-time use activities/crafts that the families will take with them, or ask parents to bring toys from home) We hope to implement Nursery Coordinator Care staff to assist and instruct families of these protocols.
- Speakers/Worship Leaders are encouraged to keep voice at a low volume, but—when necessary—the liturgy will also be projected for the hearing impaired and we encourage the use of our assisted listening devices.
- Sermons. The sermons will need to be brief, given the risks of extended exposure in public gatherings (but, don’t cheer this news too loudly because, remember: projected voices carry aerosols 😊). For those who are hearing impaired, we encourage the use of our assisted listening devices. The preacher will maintain wearing a face mask while preaching and while leading the service.
- Funerals/Weddings. Small, limited private weddings and funerals could be considered at the discretion of council and in compliance with state and local guidelines.

Singing together and unison speaking, such as reciting the Lord’s prayer and other communal speech is discouraged as it is one of the riskiest behaviors due to the spread of aerosol droplets that can carry the virus a significant distance and remain suspended in air.

At the conclusion of the service:

For the time being, receiving lines at the end of the worship service will be discontinued. Ushers who are masked and remain socially distanced will direct the departure of attendees by pew.

Vaccinations are available to the public, but not yet inclusive to all (Phase Four)

In phase four, the virus is still a threat to various communities, even despite vaccine distribution because the vaccine is not yet widely available to all populations. During, this phase, we will begin indoor, in-person worship as part of our regular worship when the positivity rate drops to 5% or below for our county, for 14 consecutive days. Livestream will continue in care and hospitality for those populations who feel that indoor, in-person worship is beyond their personal risk mitigation.

Metrics for Safety for Limited, Indoor Gatherings

Because of a restriction in our worship space *and* the continued threat of covid, council has elected to use COVID-19 protocols when worshipping inside;

- Sign up required for contact tracing
- Masks will be required
- Social distancing to be maintained
- Limit the congregation size to approximately 50 people

HCLC’s next milestone is for the infection rate to track at or below 2% for 14 consecutive days and/or Harford County’s completed vaccinated rate reaches 85% of Harford County’s population. Once this milestone is met council will move forward normalizing the worship services and the use of the building.

HOLY COMMUNION LUTHERAN CHURCH

IN LOVE OF ONE ANOTHER WE ASK THAT YOU PICK TWO WHILE VISITING OUR CHURCH

- **WEAR A MASK**
- **SOCIAL DISTANCE**
- **MEET OUTDOORS**

IT PROTECTS THOSE WHO ARE NOT YET VACCINATED
IT PROTECTS THE CLERGY AND STAFF OF THE CHURCH
LET'S KEEP OUR CHURCH SAFE, HEALTHY, OPEN, AND A RESPECTFUL PLACE FOR ALL!

Why We Mask and Continue Safe Practices:
 “By *this* everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

Please note that major holidays where gathering typically happens within households (e.g. Memorial Day, July 4th, etc.) may inject a spike in the COVID-19 infection rate. If any spike(s) take us above the 5% infection rate, the following will occur;

- In-house worship will be postponed until we have another 14 consecutive days where the infection rate is at or below 5%
- Every time the infection jumps above 5%, the count on the 14 consecutive days at or below 5% will start over
- The worship staff will determine the times for live streaming as HCLC pivots back to live streaming as our main delivery for our worship service(s)
- If someone tests positive for COVID-19 after attending a worship service, the procedures outlined

in the document “HCLC Path to In-House Worship” will be followed.

While many of the aspects of worship under phase 3 will still be in effect, the council may elect to allow for certain “relaxed” guidelines, depending upon the county’s positivity rates and the needs/risks of the community in which we serve.

Finally, it is important to remember that, while in this stage, worship is still classified as a higher-risk activity. Being “church” also means that have both vaccinated and unvaccinated people and sharing care and concern for one another is the most Jesus-y thing we can do to love our neighbor. See the updated “Choosing Safer Practices” from the CDC below.

Metrics for Safety for Ministerial Care

Much to our chagrin, covid is still very-much among us: Because of this, the ministry care team must continue to mitigate risks in care, love, and safety of our faith community, themselves, and their families. Below is what ministry care looks like, as we nimbly adapt yet again to serve the spiritual needs of our community in this time when the majority of the population *isn’t yet* vaccinated. Please also understand that we minister to *many populations, including those whom can’t be vaccinated* because of age or health concerns. But, first, please understand these foundational guidelines, which informs how ministerial care looks:

- 1) We have heard people say, “I am safe, because I have been vaccinated,” as unmasked people approach with our staff or request the ministry team removes their mask. Please consider this: Unfortunately, the CDC and WHO still do not know if vaccinated persons can still transmit the virus.¹ That means even if you (or the pastoral care team and staff) are vaccinated, you may bring the virus home and we can contract the virus and pass it along to other members whom we minister to, including our own family.
 - 2) When we visit you, **we aren’t just visiting you in one interaction.** The ministry care team come in contact with many people and must think of the whole aggregate: worship teams, musicians, people who come to church for worship, and other people whom we visit. We must take the following actions to ensure that we don’t contribute to our potential as “super spreaders.” *We are professionals who typically interact with many different people in public—for example, a home physical therapy provider would not be asked to take their masks off or be less cautious in a home setting, so neither should we.*
 - 3) Just a friendly reminder about re-opening the building for gathering: Council leadership has a standard metric that we need to achieve before we can re-open the building for gathering: the Harford County infection rate maintains a 5% rate or less for a sustained period of fourteen days. In addition to this metric we will also be looking at the vaccination rate in Harford County to determine if this metric would supersede the infection rate metric. See the re-opening documentation found under the “members” tab of our website for additional info, as well as the running trending of infection rates.
- *Home visitations.* We will happily minister to you **outdoors** of your home, masked, and socially distanced (as per the CDC guidelines for safe practices). We will happily sit on your deck, on your patio, or porch. Our ability to do so greatly depends on weather and heat. For your safety and for

¹ [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/vaccines/key-things-to-know-about-covid-19-vaccines)

ours, no indoor home visitations are permitted at this time, given the nature of us seeing multiple households throughout the day/week when we visit.

- *In-person spiritual direction appointments at church.* If you have a spiritual care need and prefer to speak to your pastor or the ministerial care team in-person, we'd love to invite you to come to our church, where we can sit in the fellowship hall, socially-distanced, masked, and properly ventilated. *How is this different than home visitations?* In our church, we have guidelines and sanitizing protocols and ventilation for creating hospitality in and despite covid.
- *Hospital visits.* Because hospitals are still limiting visitors, we will only be present for end-of-life care. While you are in the hospital and post-discharge, you can expect frequent follow up phone calls to you and your family offering prayers, but also to see if we can help with tangible care *beyond* the prayers (such as meals).
- *Funerals.* As per council's order, our church building still remains closed. However, we are happy to still plan and officiate funerals at funeral homes or at graveside, with the understanding that all people in attendance must be masked and socially distanced. We will work with your funeral home's policies and protocols, too, as limitations are still in effect in situations where the funeral home is restricted in space. As always, we continue to provide grief care to you and any family member when a loss occurs.
- *All other care.* Our pastoral care team has strived to provide a continuity of pastoral care in a variety of ways during this pandemic. We continue to hold Wednesday virtual office hours weekly and prayer sessions every Monday. We also are fully accessible (remotely) through the church office during business office hours (Tuesday-Thursday, 9:30A-3P), virtual sessions and phone meetings as scheduled in coordination of your availability, and are available on our cell phones and emails. We also share weekend "on-call" schedules, providing coverage so that we can be available for you even during a care team's day off.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Chas or a staff member. In many ways, we have expanded what pastoral care looks like, even within these challenges of the pandemic.

Choosing Safer Activities

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html>

	Unvaccinated People	Examples of Activities	Fully Vaccinated People
Outdoor			
Safest		Walk, run, wheelchair roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	
Least Safe		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	
Indoor			
Less Safe		Visit a barber or hair salon	
		Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	
		Ride public transport with limited occupancy	
		Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	
Least Safe		Go to an indoor movie theater	
		Attend a full-capacity worship service	
		Sing in an indoor chorus	
		Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	
		Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	

Get a COVID-19 vaccine



Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures

Wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).
- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.



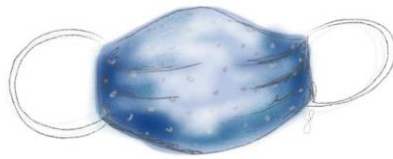
cdc.gov/coronavirus

C0324153E

Vaccinations are available to the public (Phase Five)

In phase five, the virus is no longer considered a threat to public safety and treatments/vaccinations are widely available. In short, this means that we are going to have the biggest party in the history of histories.

Additionally, our church might consider holding a church-wide service remembering those who died during the pandemic.

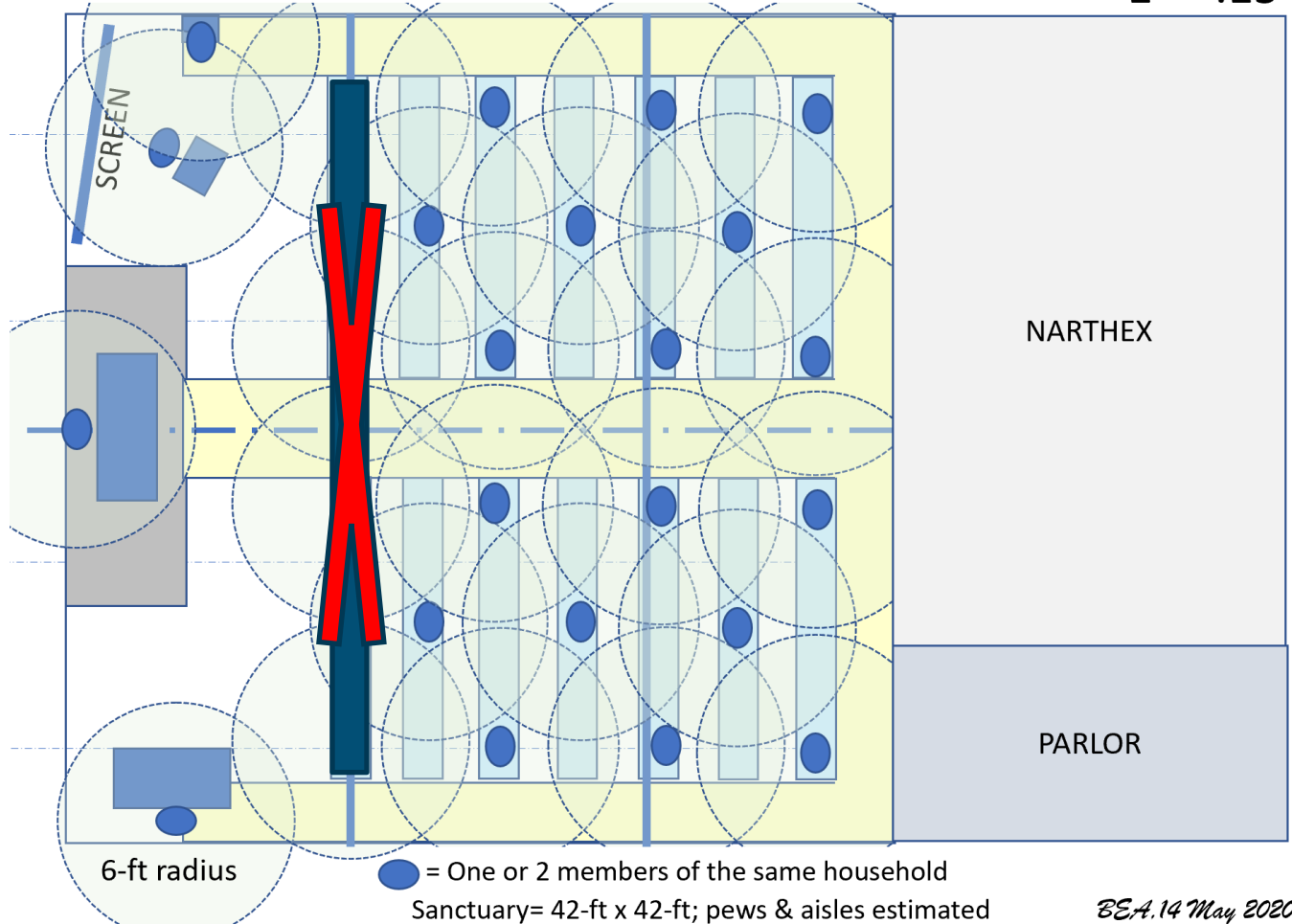


BUT IN HUMILITY
REGARD OTHERS AS
MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN YOURSELVES
-PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Appendix:

Holy Communion Lutheran Church: Capacity with 6-ft “social distancing”

1' = .15"



Please note: This graphic was prepared for 6-foot social distancing, before the state's "Faith-Based Recommendations" favored 7 feet. The first rows of pews have also been removed from the diagram, because worship leaders require 20 feet of distance due to aerosols.

Resources:

Updated Guidelines “Love Builds Up” (May 2021):

[Love Builds Up – A Response to May’s CDC Masking Update – Wisconsin Council of Churches \(wichurches.org\)](https://www.wichurches.org/)

From the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Interim Guidelines for *Vaccinated* People:

[Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0514-interim-guidelines.html)

Choosing Safer Activities:

[Choosing Safer Activities | CDC](#)

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html

From Bishop Bill Gohl, Delaware-Maryland Synod:

https://mcusercontent.com/0d270f5f756eaf3850a28b8c5/files/2f5ca23f-c307-45de-bb01-e2c826f20da2/2020_05_10_Returning_Protocols.pdf

From Presiding Bishop Elisabeth Eaton, ELCA

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Returning_to_In-person_Worship.pdf

Faith-Based Recommendations for the “Maryland: Roadmap to Recovery”:

<https://goci.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/05/Faith-Based-Recommendations.pdf>

Video from the Minneapolis Synod with Epidemiologist, Dr. Michael Osterholm.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/yvJnBay3qE1JZaPk70yGaJwnJ7rDeaa81XIY_aLLzBqWLSCBXFylAKR0VXGIFJUT

From Church Mutual, our Church’s Insurance Carrier, who determines mitigation of Risks:

<https://p.widencdn.net/r87ip0/CM0308-2020-05-RC-Recommendations-for-a-Safe-Return-to-Worship>

<https://coronavirus.churchmutual.com/>

On Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?fbclid=IwAR0-G607e9jqjFCkBX09JisiXRF1t_316OXJ6vK_ijongHLFX7iSbxr6Kqk

Church Mutual (insurance) representative:

Frank P. McCarry
Account Manager

Church Mutual Insurance Company

Phone: (800) 554-2642, Option 1 for Customer Service Toll-Free Fax: (855) 264-2329

Comprehensive Guidelines of Worship from our Episcopalian Brothers and Sisters (and from which this document is modeled):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DhfgclYRUomeWApWtRGPr_tZJ4pe5ew6/view

CDC Signage and Templates, for posting in church building

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>

...and, if you had read this far, then some additional signage from Pastor Chas' twisted humor (to be used to block off pews)

- The angel said: this is a sign unto you. You will find your seat in an open pew with no blue tape." And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God that we followed directions! (Luke 2:12-13)
- Remember when Jesus was transfigured on the mountaintop, and Peter wanted to build three shines there? Jesus said no, and he sent them down to the next pew, free of unmarked blue tape. (Mark 9:2-10)
- Why did Paul refuse to take John Mark on another missionary journey? He sat in a section that had been taped off. Don't be like John Mark (Acts 15:39)
- Sarah was in her old age when Isaac was born, but we still wouldn't have let her sit in this pew. (Genesis 21:2)
- King David cried to the Lord, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord," and so God sent him to the next pew. (Psalm 51:10)
- And then Jesus told them a parable about the need to respect the blue tape and not lose heart. (Luke 18:1)
- I waited patiently for the Lord, he inclined to me and sent me on the next pew... Psalm 40
- Jesus says, "If you love me, you'll obey my commandments..." Go to the next pew (John 14:15).
- All you who are weary and heavy laden can come to Jesus. He's in a pew that doesn't have blue tape. (Matthew 11:28)
- Jesus sat the 5000 down in rows, but not rows with blue tape! (Luke 9:14)
- The Lord maketh us lie down in green pastures. However, this is a pew, not a pasture. Move along to the next one. (Psalm 23)
- Remember when the Lord kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and put a flaming sword to guard the entrance so they couldn't come back? In Hebrew, "flaming sword," can also be translated as "blue tape." (Genesis 3:24)
- You will find me when you seek me...just not in this pew. (Jeremiah 29:13)
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God. But this blue tape helps us separate our germs, and that pleases the Lord (Romans 8:39)
- **For front row:** Warning! Preacher Splash Zone! For your health and safety, don't sit here or you may accidentally receive droplets from the preacher that aren't meant for baptism! **(Create one for music leaders?)**