

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Salem Covenant Church

Salem Covenant Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy worship gathering for all our attendees. To ensure that, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All members of our congregation are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church, and that requires full cooperation among all attendees. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our worship gatherings.

We are serious about the safety and health of our attendees who worship at Salem Covenant Church. Our Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines related to COVID-19 and addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- controls for social distancing
- housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting, and decontamination
- communication regarding possible exposure
- communications and training that will be provided
and
- management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

Screening and symptoms of COVID-19

Please stay home if you or anyone in your household is sick or has these symptoms including but not limited to: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell. Because our gatherings will happen only once per week initially, we are depending on self-monitoring of all attendees and we are discouraging anyone from attending our weekly gathering who is ill whether with COVID-19 symptoms or not.

Salem Covenant Church has also implemented a policy for informing the congregation if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at the worship gathering and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. We will communicate with the entire congregation regarding the positive diagnosis and take the necessary precautions to prevent further exposure or infection of others who may be diagnosed.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of attendees' health status and health information. We will communicate diagnoses anonymously unless the infected person grants permission for us to share such information as a prayer request and/or desire for the safety of others.

Handwashing and Sanitizing

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our gatherings. Attendees are encouraged to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water as often as possible. We will provide hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water.

Hand-sanitizer dispensers will be conveniently located at the entrances of the building and in the narthex.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

All attendees 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 will be supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to everyone in attendance.

Social distancing

Social distancing is being implemented in the building through the following controls:

- We will use an alternating seating pattern to keep families from sitting directly behind or in front of another attendee and at a minimum six-foot distance.
- We will discourage handshakes and encourage other social distancing greetings.
- We will **require masks** to be worn inside the facility unless there is a medical condition, mental or physical disability that prohibits an attendee from doing so. Extra masks will be available for those who do not have one.
- Attendees will be registered upon arrival to aid in notification if a positive case does occur among one of the attendees that day.
- We will use our screen for worship exclusively, and we will forgo the use of bulletins, hymnals and pew Bibles for the time being.
- The Pastor and those participating in the worship service will not be required to wear a mask while on the stage because they are at least 12 feet from the closest congregant.
- We will provide an offering receptacle on the narthex table to collect the offerings in place of ushers passing offering plates.
- We will also encourage parents to keep their children with them during and following all gatherings as there will be no nursery available.
- To maintain social distancing, access to the library should be limited to one person or one family group at a time.
- To maintain social distancing, access to the restrooms should be limited to one person or one family group at a time. There will be no way to sanitize after every use, so we encourage you to limit the use of the restrooms if possible.
- We ask that when you arrive, please don't linger in the hallways, entrances or narthex, and visit with other attendees.
- Attendees will be ushered out following the service and are asked to exit the building. Please practice social distancing when socializing outdoors.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of all areas in the worship environment, including restrooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high- touch areas, such as door handles and pew backs. The cleaning and disinfecting will happen before and after each worship gathering.

Communications and training

This Preparedness Plan is available to all members and attendees and will be posted at every entrance. Additional communication and training will be ongoing via public announcements during services, emails, website, and mail to inform the congregation, staff, and volunteers. Pastors and Executive board members are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by paying special attention before and after worship gatherings. This Preparedness Plan has been certified by Executive Board and will be updated as necessary.

Gary Beckman
COVID-19 Preparedness Coordinator
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