

Frequently Asked Questions Reopening Immanuel Lutheran Church Sanctuary May 11, 2020

On March 18, Immanuel suspended in-person worship to protect individuals at risk for COVID-19 and to share in sacrifices being made by individuals, businesses, and groups in our community to “flatten the curve” so as not to overwhelm hospital capacity. As we prepare to reopen the sanctuary for in-person worship, we will continue to honor those principles.

At their meeting May 7, the Elders considered the guidance provided by Governor Holcomb for churches who wish to resume in-person services as well as responses from members to a survey provided to them. **The Elders approved conducting modified in-person services at Immanuel again starting May 17. We will continue the broadcast and live streaming for those who should not or choose not to attend at this time.**

Q: When will Immanuel have in-person worship again?

A: **Starting Sunday, May 17.**

Q: Should everyone attend?

A: **No. These people especially should worship from home, if possible:**

- 1) **If you have symptoms of illness, like fever, cough, or sneezing**
- 2) **If you are 65 or older with underlying health conditions**
- 3) **If you have health conditions that make you more susceptible to illness**
- 4) **If you are not yet comfortable being out in a crowd.**

Q: Which services will be offered?

A: **All three regular services: 9 and 11:15 Sunday, and 7:00 p.m. Monday.**

Q: Will there be “physical distance” for worshippers?

A: **Yes, we will use only every-other row of seating.**

Q: How many people would that be for each service?

A: **Up to 450 people may be seated in each service while still having physical distance.**

Q: What if more than that many people arrive?

A: **Overflow seating will be available, if needed, in the Fellowship Hall.**

Q: Will the church bus be running?

A: **No, not at this time.**

Q: What other steps are taken to protect those who gather?

A: **There are several important changes, including:**

- 1) **Doors will be propped open before and after services and all door handles will be sanitized before and after each service**
- 2) **Many new hand-sanitizers have been placed outside the sanctuary.**
- 3) **All bulletins will include hymns and liturgy, so hymnals will be removed.**
- 4) **Bulletins will be already where you may sit, instead of being passed out. These are to be taken home by the worshipper, or will be discarded, not reused.**
- 5) **We will not pass the attendance register.**

- 6) Ushers will not pass the offering plate but will have it on a table at the exits.
- 7) Pews will be sanitized before and after each service.
- 8) We will not have greeters to begin with.
- 9) Pastors will not greet after the services.
- 10) Ushers will help people find seats and dismiss worshippers to avoid crowding.
- 11) If there is a children's message, children will stay with their families.

Q: Can I wear a mask?

A: **Yes. It is not required, but you are welcome to do so.**

Q: Will there be Sunday School and Bible Classes?

A: **No, we will not offer them at this point.**

Q: Will the nursery be open?

A: **Yes, as a place parents may bring children, but it will not be staffed.**

Q: Will we be serving Holy Communion?

A: **Yes. However, there will be changes to how it is offered for now to respect physical distancing and extraordinary precautions for sanitization:**

- 1) We will have two stations in front of the Communion rail in the sanctuary and one in the chapel for "continuous serving" rather than gathering around the rail
- 2) We will offer Communion in all services for the rest of May
- 3) Those serving the bread will be 6-8 feet from those distributing the cups
- 4) We will use only the individual cups for now
- 5) Elders preparing Communion will not touch the bread with their hands and will use masks and one-time only latex gloves to place the cups in the trays for filling
- 6) Those serving will sanitize their hands publicly before serving
- 7) The host will be dropped (not placed) into the open hands of the communicant
- 8) Cups will be placed on a table for the communicant to pick up to avoid contact
- 9) Cups will be disposed of in the receptacle provided
- 10) Individuals will come up the side aisles and return the center aisle, directed by the ushers according to family groups, who will keep separation
- 11) The blessing will be provided to all communicants at the end of Communion
- 12) The blessing of children will be done without touching them

Q: How long will these changes be in place?

A: **We will review them and change them when it seems safe to do so.**

Q: Will people be upset with me if I choose to worship from home for now?

A: **We will not. We trust people to make the decision that best suits them now. That is why the broadcast and live-streaming will continue.**

Thanks for taking time to review these questions and answers. Please continue to pray for your leaders and fellow members during this time. If you have questions not addressed above, feel free to call your Elder or the church office or email info@immanuelseymour.com.