

## **COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Mount Olive Lutheran Church Anoka, Minnesota**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at Mount Olive:

In anticipation of resuming worship on Sunday, June 14, 2020 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Anoka, the Board of Elders and I met to discuss what safety protocols we would be putting in place in order to best comply with governmental regulations and suggestions, and in order to minimize the chances of anyone contracting the coronavirus at our services. We considered issues of reverence, sanitation, social distancing, and amount of time spent in the church. We have decided upon the following. We realize that some of these will be unpopular, but we ask you to bear with us as we attempt to navigate through these times. We have never been down this path and we know we cannot simply go back to doing things the way we were before this pandemic. We will proceed carefully out of love for one another and concern for each other's health and wellbeing. So, it is important to voluntarily follow the precautions outlined below. Be assured we will adjust our practices as needed.

### **A few things to think about before returning to worship at Mount Olive:**

1. If you are in a high-risk category because of underlying health conditions or over the age of 65, do not feel compelled to attend public worship services until you feel comfortable with the potential health risk. Guard your health. We will continue to provide online worship on our website ([www.mtolive-anoka.org](http://www.mtolive-anoka.org)), on our Face Book and Instagram pages (Mount Olive Anoka) and our YouTube channel (Mount Olive Lutheran Anoka). You can also find services on QCTV Cable TV Channel 15 for the cities of Anoka, Andover, Champlin and Ramsey on Sundays at 6:30 AM and 12:00 PM. Services aired are from the previous week.
  - a. Also, if you would like private communion with one of our pastors or elders, please call the church for an appointment.
2. You are urged to stay home if you are ill in other ways or showing symptoms of COVID-19. Likewise, if someone in your household is ill or has COVID-19 please remain at home for the time being and worship at home using our online and cable TV options.

**Symptoms of COVID-19** can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

3. Wash your hands often. Frequent and thorough hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other diseases.
4. If you plan on attending onsite services, you are encouraged to wear a mask when entering and exiting the building in consideration of others attending. You are welcome to wear a mask throughout the service, as you feel comfortable. If you forgot your mask or don't have one, one will be available to you at church if desired. Please be considerate of your neighbor's wishes to wear/not wear a mask. Our respectful and loving care for one another allows freedom in this matter.

### **Now, a few things to expect when you do come to worship – the new normal:**

1. We ask you to enter church by either Door E (near church nursery) or Main Entrance near lower parking lot. You can park in upper lot but Door A will not be open to minimize traffic in the building. Just follow sidewalk to Main Entrance. The entrance doors from the parking lot and Worship Center doors will be propped open until worship begins in order to enable touchless entry. There will be hand sanitizer and extra masks available at both entrances.
2. Those entering Door E will be asked to enter Worship Center through the door located there. Those entering Main Entrance will be directed to main doors of Worship Center. You will be directed to a seat by an usher or elder. We have blocked off every other pew, and have marked pews with fluorescent tape to allow two households per pew with social distance, not to exceed 50% capacity or 200 people. Beyond that families will be directed to the balcony or tables in Welcome Center.
3. We will limit traffic inside building to Worship Center, the Welcome Center, and the bathrooms near the Welcome Desk. The church kitchen, coffee shop, meeting rooms, Cana Hall and the Family Center are off limits at this time.
4. We are unable to provide nursery service at this time. The cry room and nursing room will be available without books and toys. We are also not able to provide busy bags or activity trays at this time. Parents, please bring books, activity sheets or toys from home. Thanks for your patience in this matter.
5. Our services will be shorter in length (35-40 min.) with 2-3 songs or hymns. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper it will be touchless with prepacked containers on tables located throughout the Worship Center.

### **After the service:**

1. After worship, you will be ushered out 2 sections at a time towards Door E or the Main Entrance. Pastor will not be greeting or dismissing with the customary shaking of hands.
2. We ask that you exit the building right away to maintain social distancing. We encourage any conversation and fellowship outside or in parking lots with social distance. This will also enable our cleaning teams to do their work in preparation for the next service.
3. Please be both courteous and patient with one another.
4. Please do not shake hands, hug, or touch people in greeting before or after the service and do your best to maintain social distancing.

### **In addition to offering public worship services:**

1. We will continue to offer recorded services online or on DVD.
2. We will offer family communion services by appointment.
3. You are encouraged to continue to develop and strengthen your personal devotional and prayer life and that of your immediate household using online, TV and print resources.
4. Please continue to pray for one another, for our congregation, and for your pastors, staff and congregation leaders.
5. Please also pray for Governor Walz, our medical personnel, and for our community.

We encourage each person to respect the Christian liberty of others: please refrain from forming opinions about others in terms of whether or not they attend in-person services or whether or not they wear a face mask. The above are precautions that have been provided as best practices at this time.

Let us rejoice, for we once again have the joy that comes from gathering together with one another to receive the forgiveness of sins personally and directly through the Word and Sacrament ministry of Christ's Church!

Our first public service back in the Worship Center will be on Sunday, June 14 with services at 8:00 (traditional worship with hymns and liturgy) and 9:30 a.m. (praise worship with informal worship elements and music provided by pre-recorded Christian music videos or our Praise Team).

We will keep monitoring the situation, and make any changes deemed necessary. If there is an outbreak of coronavirus at our church (2 or more cases), we will consider pausing in-person onsite worship and onsite activities at church for at least two weeks. We want to be sensitive to "hot spots" and churches will be closely scrutinized. We will also monitor other orders from the governor to determine when and how in-person onsite worship will continue.

If you have any questions or comments, let me know at [jon@mtolive-anoka.org](mailto:jon@mtolive-anoka.org)

In Jesus,  
Pastor Jon

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan ADDENDUM

## Guidelines for Employees and Volunteers:

- Church employees are not required to work onsite. Church volunteers are not required to volunteer. If any employee or volunteer does not feel comfortable working, volunteering, or being present for worship or work at this time, he or she is free to remain home and work from home, and will not be penalized in any way for doing so. Please communicate your desire to stay home to Pastor Jon or Brenda so that a substitute can be found, if needed. Such information will be considered privileged and will be kept confidential.
- Staff and volunteers are encouraged to wash their hands frequently (soap, water, and hand sanitizer will be provided), cover their coughs and sneezes, and maintain 6 feet of social distance between themselves and anyone who is not of their household.
- Offices, restrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, and frequently touched surfaces will be routinely cleaned and sanitized.
- Staff and volunteers should stay home if they are ill, or showing symptoms of COVID-19. Likewise, if someone in their household is ill.

**Symptoms of COVID-19** can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

- 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 with COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home immediately.

## Communications and Training Practices and Protocol

1. All leadership and staff will be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure, as well as applicable policies, procedures, practices, and protocols.
2. The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and Addendum will be posted in the Welcome Center, office and school corridors and will be shared with/reviewed by staff.
3. Protective measures will be communicated to members and participants prior to, and at the start of the resumption of public worship services to both educate and inform people of their role in protecting themselves and others.

## To Minimize Possible Transmission

1. Participants should conduct a self-check and stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Visitors and participants should review the screening survey posted.
3. Persons who may be at a higher risk for severe illness are strongly encouraged to stay home.
4. Persons who have a household member experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19 should also stay home.
5. If a participant begins to feel unwell while in the facility, they should leave immediately and isolate themselves at home.
6. Participants will be encouraged to regularly wash and/or sanitize their hands.
7. Participants are encouraged to wear a face mask if they are able.
8. Congregational singing opportunities will be limited.