



800 Southview Ct. E
Marshall, MN 56258
507-337-WORD (9673)

livingword@livingwordmarshall.org

Pastors Kelly Wasberg and David Christensen

Living Word Lutheran Church Re-Gathering Plan – Effective May 27, 2020

As you know, Governor Walz has issued new guidelines for churches that he and his team called “Re-Opening.” We are calling it “Re-Gathering”. That is an important clarification for us because churches were never closed! The church is the people of God, not the building. We never stopped preaching and worshipping together. The Holy Spirit is moving. Buildings can be shut, but a church is never closed. God’s people know this. It is one of the great gifts that God gives – a church is any gathering of people who seek the Lord. Do we wish we could be together, face to face, hugging, shaking hands, encouraging one another in faith? Absolutely, and we will be again as soon as we can to fully enhance the ministry together.

That being said – there has been a new order from Governor Walz concerning churches. Pastors will be putting out a video that outlines our plans for the coming weeks. You can watch that video on our YouTube channel [Living Word YouTube Channel](#). The following are the bullet points that we will be talking about in that video with direct points from the order being shown in quotes.

1. There are a whole host of protocols and procedures to put in place. If you wish to read the guidelines, they can all be found at the following links:

- [MN Guidance for Faith Communities](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Faith Communities](#)

Until we have the supplies we need and volunteer teams to sanitize a large space, we are not able to abide by the guidelines for indoor worship, so worshipping outdoors is our best option at this point. If you are able to donate any of the following products it would be greatly appreciated: gel hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes. Please bring them Sunday mornings or make other arrangements with Kim.

2. Churches can now open for worship – “In indoor settings, occupancy must not exceed 25% of total occupancy, with a maximum of 250 people in a single self-contained space.”

For Living Word that means a maximum of 150 worshipping. This order still requires physical distancing between people who do not live in the same household. Thus, the max number of 250 doesn’t apply to us because we can’t get 250 in our sanctuary while following the required guidelines of social distancing.

3. “In outdoor settings, gatherings must not exceed 250 people.” This is our best option for getting the most people gathered for worship in a setting that has the least possibility for infecting those around us.

4. “This guidance is limited to weddings, funerals, and faith-based services...and does not apply to related celebrations or social gatherings. Such social gatherings continue to be limited to 10 people.” And later in the new guidelines it says – **“Maximize remote-working - Staff who are able to work from home must work from home.”**

- *We are currently not allowing any groups, even if under 10 people, to meet on-site at the church. We will continue to reassess this in the coming weeks. When our sanitation team is in place and we have supplies that allow us to honor the new orders we will reassess opening the church for 10 people or more, whatever number is allowed by any future guidelines that are given.*
- *Bible studies will continue online via Zoom, Facebook, etc. Off-site studies are also encouraged – as long as you maintain social distancing, other safety protocols and the number of participants is no greater than 10 per state guidelines.*
- *At this time, Staff will continue to work from home – with some exceptions. Occasionally one of us will be on-site to work from our office for one reason or another. On-site meetings will also be allowed for staff, leadership, and personnel within the guideline restrictions.*
- *During this time, church doors will continue to be locked. If you would like to meet with a Pastor or staff, please contact that person directly to set up an appointment.*

5. In light of all of this – our pastors, staff and leadership have decided that we will worship outside until we can fulfill the needed sanitation guidelines outlined in the government documents. Where and how we do worship could also change if guidelines shift and we are either further restricted, or they loosen up the requirements.

Starting Sunday June 7th we invite you to join us for outdoor worship at Living Word at 10:30AM. We will have one service at 10:30AM unless the number worshipping exceeds 250. If/when that happens, we will have two outdoor worship services at our normal worship times of 8:00 and 10:30. We will also continue to have live stream worship available on our YouTube channel for those who prefer, or who need to continue worshipping from home for health or safety reasons.

- *The church parking lot entrance from Highway 23 will be blocked off on Sunday mornings. Please use the entrance on Southview Court East to access the church parking lot.*
- *We ask that you practice physical distancing between members of other households at all times while on the church property. This includes the people next to you, in front of you and behind you. We will have ushers helping direct you.*
- *Bring your own chair.*
- *Bring your own coffee and snacks. There will not be food or drink available on-site.*
- *There will be an offering box for you to drop your offering into on Sunday mornings. We still highly encourage you to consider using online and mobile giving options or sign up for automated Simply Giving.*
- *The church building is not open on Sunday morning unless you need to use the bathroom. No more than two people at a time should be in the bathrooms at any one time unless you are from the same household. We'd suggest not using the bathrooms at all unless you have to! All other areas of the church are off limits.*
- *The lyrics for the Worship Service songs will be attached to the Thursday email. Please either print your own copy to bring along or use your mobile device to pull them up. Printed copies will not be distributed on Sunday mornings. Furthermore, we will continue to email the Announcement Folder on Thursday's in lieu of distributing paper copies on Sunday mornings. Please email Kim if you'd like to be added to the email list.*
- **Cleaning** - *We will need a team of 5 people willing to stay after services and wipe down doors and bathroom surfaces. Please email Kim if you are willing to serve in this way!*
- **Sound Setup/Tear Down** - *We also need 3-4 people to help set up and take down the sound system each week. Please email Kim if you are willing to serve in this way!*

6. There's no better time than now to practice sacrificial love for your neighbor.

- *“Participants should conduct a self-check and stay home if they or a member of their household have symptoms of COVID-19.” Please see the guideline links above for detail on self-checks.*
- *For the safety of others, feel free to take your temperature before coming to church. If you feel fine but are running a “low-grade temp” please stay home.*
- *Participants are advised to stay home if they have had a “significant exposure to COVID-19”.*
- *“Persons who may be at higher risk for severe illness are strongly encouraged to stay home.” All of us want to be together in worship, but some of us should not return to public worship. Those in a high-risk group should stay home. We have the great gift of online live stream Worship Services. As we have mentioned many times, we feel your presence with us when worshipping together on-line. The Holy Spirit is uniting us in powerful ways. Staying home and worshipping with us online is a faithful way to gather! Be Safe. Be Wise.*
- *The CDC encourages use of cloth face coverings. Please provide your own face mask as we do not have a supply on hand.*
- *Respect others by keeping a safe distance from them. We want people to feel safe. We want people to be focused on Jesus when they come to worship. Let's make every effort to help others return to the fellowship that we all so badly long for.*