

Guidelines and Procedures for Resuming Public Services

Trinity Lutheran Church – Herscher, IL

June 2nd, 2020

Starting June 6th and 7th, Trinity will be resuming her two weekly worship services at their normal times. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a desire for the well being of our neighbors requires that several safety guidelines be put into place.

Before Coming To Church

1 – Deciding to Attend. If you are running a temperature or feel unwell, please stay home. If you are worried about your own safety, please stay home. Service on Sunday morning will still be broadcast on Facebook and then posted to YouTube.

2 - Practice Good Personal Sanitation. Please wash your hands before coming to church (and even after arriving if you are so inclined). If you have some, please bring your own hand sanitizer (the church has limited amounts). When entering and exiting the building, we ask you to wear a mask. (If you wish, you may remove it while seated in your pew.)

Before Service

4 – Bulletins and Hymnals. We have removed all the hymnals from the pew, simply to make cleaning and sanitizing the church after service easier. All the words to the hymns and liturgy will be printed in the bulletin. If you would like to have a hymnal as part of your worship, you may pick one up in the parish hall, but then please **take it home with you** and bring it with you again for worship. That way you're the only one handling the hymnal you use.

5 – Hold Back on Socializing. We do need to exercise some restraint in how we interact, even with people whom we haven't seen in a while. Please hold off on shaking hands and things like that. Also, if you want to chat with people, please do so outside both before and after the service. That's what the open air is good for.

6 – Find a Socially Distanced Seat. Two thirds of the pews have been roped off. Please sit in an open pew and try to keep some distance from each other.

During Service

7 – Feel Free to Sing. We will have our normal style service, with responses and singing. Please feel free to sing.

8 – Offerings May Be Placed in the Plates Near the Exits. For any offerings you might bring, we won't be passing the plates. Instead, there will be offering plates near the exits. You may simply place your offering in them on the way in or the way out.

9 – Communion – We will be celebrating Communion at our service, but our distribution will be slightly different. Both the Pastor and the Elder of the Day will have washed their hands mid-service and be masked. Then, instead of kneeling at the rail, we will be doing a continuous communion. The pews will go in order – first everyone on the Lectern (left) side and then everyone on the Pulpit side. Before it is your turn for communion, wait at the baptismal font. When it is your turn, come stand in the front middle, receive communion, and then return to your pew. This will keep everyone spread out during communion.

The communion trays will only have 11 cups in them – 9 normal cups spaced evenly around the outside, and then 2 watered down cups in the middle. Please exercise care to touch only the cup that you yourself are using.

Also, if kids want to come up for a blessing, that is perfectly fine and Pastor will be happy to bless them. He will be blessing with a different hand than he distributes the Supper with, and there will be hand sanitizer up front for him to use, just to be extra safe.

10 – When Service is Finished, Chat Joyously Outside – When service is done, let's head on outside, and there in the open air we can chat, laugh, converse – all that sort of stuff. We've got a big parking lot and a lovely green, we'll use these places to socialize. Please take your bulletins with you (or throw them away). If you are one who wants to use a hymnal, take it with you (you touch it, you take it).

Concluding Thoughts

All of us have been living through these strange few months. We all know the general precautions that are being encouraged. Some of us in general abide by them more, some less. Here at Church, please lean toward caution for the sake of your fellow members, many of whom are older.

Also, you know yourself what you are comfortable with. While we would love to see you here, we want you to be comfortable. When you are ready, we'll be here open and ready to see you again. Don't feel pressured to attend. Don't feel pressured to commune in service – if you would prefer to either not commune or to receive communion from pastor at another time, that is fine. We will be flexible and all take care of each other. Be safe – but more importantly, be at Peace in Christ Jesus!