

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (HTLC)
Dubuque Iowa
Pandemic Reopening Directive

The goal of the HTLC Pandemic Reopening Directive, or PRD, is to ensure the safety and health of our community. The PRD is a four-phase plan that provides for certain public health conditions to be met prior to the implementation of the next phase.

At any point in time, the plan may be put on hold, maintaining the current phase. Also, be mindful that the phased approach presented will likely not be a linear one; there may be times of gradual reopening as infections decrease, followed by restrictions if new waves of infections emerge. The Executive Committee of HTLC certifies when each phase of the PRD is to be implemented. The Church Council has the authority to enforce the guidelines of this plan.

No matter what phase of the PRD that HTLC is operating under, Parishioners are reminded to practice proper hygiene and other practical public health mitigation efforts including staying home if they are ill, think they are ill, or have had direct contact with someone who is ill.

Guidelines from the Federal Government (including the CDC, Iowa Department of Health, etc.) and other public health officials will be followed with the implementation of the below phases.

The Pastor(s) and Worship Committee will make a recommendation to council to determine the best practice in relation to congregational singing and celebration of the sacraments once worship is again occurring in-person.

At any point of time during the re-opening process, critical detail will be given to cleaning and sanitizing of the Church facility with increasing frequency as more persons enter the building in accordance with CDC/EPA guidelines.

As we approach the summer months and the activities that come during that time of the year, the Church council will determine if an event will occur and discern guidelines surrounding any given event. This includes but is not limited to VBS and any mission trips.

If at any point in time a Parishioner becomes ill with COVID-19 and has been in attendance at a small group gathering or an in-person indoor or outdoor worship service, the Parishioner is HIGHLY encouraged to contact either Pastor Josh or Pastor Derek immediately in order that the Church may assist with contact tracing and appropriate disease mitigation processes.

Clear signage reminding congregants of best hygiene practices and other guidelines for proper distancing will be posted.

Phase One: We are currently in this Phase which requires:

- Maintain worshiping through electronic means.
- Funerals and weddings may occur in the sanctuary should they be permitted by law (but will be encouraged to occur outdoors). These gatherings are limited to immediate family. Persons participating in a funeral or wedding are required to certify verbally they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 as outlined by the CDC and their temperatures shall be taken as they enter church.

- The Church office will continue to operate; however, the Church building will remain locked to visitors. If a visitor is invited into the building, any person present must adhere to the guidelines above in relation to a funeral or wedding
- All other Church activities and meetings must occur electronically
- SEE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS BELOW

Phase Two: If after implementation of Phase One there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for **four** additional consecutive weeks, and if approved by the Pastor, then HTLC may:

- Maintain worshiping through electronic means
- Funeral and worship guidelines remain unchanged from Phase One
- The Church council may encourage Parishioners to sign-up through a reservation system (such as reopen.church) to participate in gatherings at church which will limit the number of members as follows:
 - A maximum of 60 people can gather for worship in the Sanctuary
- There will be no social/coffee hour following worship
- Committees and small groups will still be strongly encouraged to meet electronically
- The HTLC Church facility will remain closed except for worship and by appointment.
- SEE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS BELOW

Phase Three

If after implementation of Phase Two, there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for **four** additional consecutive weeks, HTLC may:

- Maintain worshiping through electronic means
- The Church council may encourage an **increased** number of Parishioners to sign-up through a reservations system (such as reopen.church) to participate in gatherings at church which will limit the number of members
- If conditions permit (and public gatherings greater than ten persons are permitted by law), the HTLC Church Council may authorize public in-person worship through an outdoor setting
- Social/coffee hour following worship can resume (and all people who handle food must wear protective gloves)
- The same guidelines as above would be in place for any kind of worship, including but not limited to a funeral or wedding (post-funeral luncheons will not be permitted)
- The Church office will be open for appointments (the building will remain closed; no in person activities)
- Committees and small groups (ten persons or less) will still be strongly encouraged to meet electronically
- SEE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS BELOW

Phase Four

If after implementation of Phase Three, there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for an additional four consecutive weeks, then HTLC may:

- Authorize a return to full in-person worship capacity
- In consultation with the Worship Committee, singing, communion and the celebration of sacraments can resume
- Maintain worshipping through electronic means
- Persons over the age of 65 or those who have other underlying health conditions are still strongly encouraged to consider their safety in relation to attending worship
- Require appropriate public health disease prevention and mitigation measures as prescribed by public health authorities
- Permit groups to meet in-person as deemed necessary and resume in-person educational endeavors as necessary

Additional requirements during Phases Two & Three:

- Participants are always to wear a face mask when in the building
- Participants are to practice proper hand **hygiene** (soap and water or 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer) immediately upon entry into the building. Hand sanitizer units will be placed around the building.
- Persons participating (including staff) are required to certify verbally they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 as outlined by the CDC and their temperatures shall be taken as they enter church.
- Persons over the **age** of 65 or those who have other underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged to consider their safety in relation to attending service at this time.
- Individuals participating shall refrain from doing so if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, think they may be **ill**, or have had contact with someone they think may be ill
- Parishioners participating in-person in the outdoor setting would be required to follow all appropriate federal and local social **distancing** guidelines including but not limited to maintain at least 6' of distance between members of different households
- The Worship Committee may have directives on in-person worship to include:
 - Guidance on the sharing of the peace or passing of an **offering** plate
 - Guidance on distribution of worship materials including:
 - Worship materials provided electronically or made available upon the projection screen
 - Will hymnals be removed from the pews
 - Will Parishioners will be encouraged to bring their own hymnal if they so desire
 - Can Parishioners have an opportunity to “check out” a hymnal

- Increased frequency and intensity of the cleaning and sanitizing of the public spaces of the church.
- Suspend the shaking of hands during the sharing of the peace.
- Pastors and greeters will no longer shake hands at sanctuary doors as people enter or exit.
- Parishioners will be seated and dismissed by ushers to help in maintaining social distancing

The Church Council asks that Parishioners of HTLC please remain patient throughout the re-opening process.

It is asked that all persons remember that this is a plan which is subject to change in relation to the conditions that are being experienced. As the people of HTLC, we must be prepared to take a few steps forwards and possibly many steps backwards at any point in time. The Church Council is committed to regularly reviewing the re-opening process and making scientific fact-based decisions in conjunction with thorough moral deliberation that benefits the wellbeing of all the people of HTLC and the greater community.

The Church council will also consider placing policies in their record book in the event of future pandemics.