

COVID-19 update
June 25th, 2020

Dear Saints of God,

We are writing you to provide a more detailed update on Atonement's planning concerning the ongoing viral outbreak. As things progress with the phased recovery in Washington State, we will also look to phase in various aspects of the faith life here at Atonement. The plan is to offer a brief Service of the Word (Confession/Absolution, Apostles Creed, Lord's Prayer) with communion **by appointment** through most of Phase 2 with the numbers given by the Governor's edict. This will be available starting June 10th. Communion will be done with the recommendations from the CDC and Public Health put into full effect. In addition to communion by appointment, on Sunday July 5th, we will resume in-person worship on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. following the guidelines listed below. We will continue to record the full services and post them on our website for those who still are unable to join in physical worship. For Phase 2 and possibly Phase 3, there will be no in-person Bible Classes. Those will continue via remote technology. Listed below are the mandates for our in-person gatherings handed down by public health earlier in the pandemic with our plans for each item.

- Older and vulnerable individuals have been encouraged not to attend
 - This includes staff, volunteers, and the people serving Atonement. We certainly would strongly encourage those in our midst who are most at risk (65 and older as well as those with underlying conditions) to **stay home** and have Pastor Swan come to them and provide any spiritual care that is needed. Before any in person visit, Pastor will consult each facility to ensure that all the requirements for visitation laid out by the individual facility and public health are met before visiting in person. The elders will also be available by phone to provide care and support.
- Recommendations for social distancing and limiting close contact are met
 - We will require people and family groups give at least 6 feet of space and spread out throughout the whole church. We will require the usage of masks. We will have service attendance at 25% of the fire code occupancy until Phase 3. In addition, we will have staggered dismissal at the end of the service to ensure an adequate amount of time and space between people and families. Also, things such as passing the offering plates and attendance books will continue to be suspended for the foreseeable future.
 - In this letter as well in the bulletin, we wish to reiterate that things such as handshakes and hugs be curtailed now and for the foreseeable future.
 - Communion will be done with limiting contact as much as possible in Phases 2 and 3. This includes making individual appointments, not gathering around the rail outside of immediate live-in family, and appropriate protective procedures will be used with each interaction. Single use communion cups will be the primary method of distribution. At all times, six feet of space will be maintained with communion being given in a specific staging area.
- Employees or volunteers leading an event are screened for symptoms each day
 - We will encourage everyone, volunteer or not, to stay home if they have any symptoms such as a fever, cough, and respiratory distress. All volunteers and employees will check their temperature before coming to the church.
- Proper hand washing, sanitation, and cleaning is readily available
 - We encourage anyone who comes to the church to wash their hands, at minimum, on their way in and on their way out. Sinks are available in the restrooms, the David Room, and the Stephen Room. In addition, alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available in the sanctuary.
 - There will be both posted and verbal reminders of this at every service.

- Environmental cleaning guidelines are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily or more frequently)
 - All highly touched surfaces will be disinfected with CDC recommended products before and after every service. All hymnals and Bibles from the pew back have been removed and disinfected. We will encourage people to bring their own Bibles and hymnals. If either is needed, we will drop off what is requested via contactless delivery. We will ensure the capability for people to enter and exit the building without ever needing to touch a doorknob or other items and we will be strongly encouraging people to utilize those routes. We also will keep several doors connected to the sanctuary open before, during, and after the service to enhance air circulation and ventilation of the worship space.

In addition to these measures, we would strongly encourage the entire church community to continue to remember their neighbor. Things like regularly calling and checking in on family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances should be a vital part of daily living, but especially during times like this health crisis in Western Washington. We should be ready to aid in any way we can while keeping in mind the best practices and procedures recommended by the CDC and Public Health. There may be significant need and opportunities to continue to provide meals and childcare to families affected by extended school closures. Those who are or may be without work will need support and charity coming from our time, talents, and treasures in the weeks and months ahead. The more we can prepare as the body Christ to love and care for our neighbor, the better we can maintain the work of the ministry of the saints here at Atonement in the short and long term. Finally, in the space below, resources will be given to support the needs of body and soul throughout this time of outbreak.

In Christ,

Pastor Swan and the leadership of Atonement

Resources:

Health

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

King County Health <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus.aspx>

King County Health <https://publichealthinsider.com/>

Faith

Atonement's video services <https://www.atonement-lcms.org/sermons>

Sermons, studies, and devotional resources <https://www.lutheranhour.org/>

LCMS radio <https://www.kfuo.org/>

We also have a limited number of cassette tapes and players available for each of Atonement's services.