

## **CORONAVIRUS AND FUTURE PANDEMIC POLICY**

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The health, safety and welfare of each of our congregants, guests, staff and users of the facility as well as their family members is a high priority for us. We are closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 disease ("COVID-19"). This policy includes the measures we are actively taking (or have taken) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and will also serve as a guideline for any future pandemic level viruses that may occur. All people using the facility at Grace Lutheran Church ("the church") must follow these procedures diligently to sustain a healthy and safe environment at the church. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions. Because of the fluidity of this ever-changing situation, this policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional Public Health and Provincial/Federal Governmental guidelines. Any future changes to this policy will be made and communicated via email and other forms of communication as deemed acceptable by church leadership.

This policy applies to all staff, congregants, guests and users who are physically at the church, at any given time, as well as those who participate in programs, remotely. We strongly recommend to those who access programs remotely, to read through this action plan to ensure we collectively and uniformly respond to this challenge. Grace Lutheran Church, Calgary reserves the right to revise, supplement, rescind or deviate from any policies or portion of this response from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion and because of the rapid pace of changes – with or without advance written notice.

Everyone should take all necessary precaution to protect themselves and others from a potential COVID-19 infection. While precautions to prevent the spread of the virus are taken, it is understood by everyone who attends any event at the church, that there is a potential risk of the virus being spread. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 everyone should comply with requirements, guidelines and public health directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

### **KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 – WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

Symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to those for influenza or other respiratory illnesses. Anyone who has the following symptoms are legally required to [self-isolate](#) and should be tested for COVID-19.

- Fever
- A new cough or a chronic cough that is worsening
- New or worsening shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Runny nose

Additional Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle or joint aches

**Date of Issue:** June 16, 2020

**Review/Revised Date:** September 16, 2021

- Feeling unwell in general, or new fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye

If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and advise them that you may have COVID-19. Do not visit a hospital, doctor's office, lab or healthcare facility for non-urgent medical needs without consulting [Health Link 811](#) first.

## **PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent the COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Everyday preventive action to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses include:

- Practice physical distancing: keep at least 2 meters (the length of a hockey stick) away from other people not from your household or cohort family.
- Clean hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and/or wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Wear non-medical mask when possible, especially when 2-meter distancing is not possible
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- self-isolate for the legally required 10 days if you have any symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or medical condition
- Avoid travel outside Canada – You will not be permitted into the building until you have completed 14 day quarantine, if you or members of your family have travelled
- Additional cleaning measures are in effect, including disinfecting your own pew after use (if you are able to do so. The church will have supplies for your use)
- **Immediately notify the church office if you suspect you have the virus (403-249-8562 or [office@calgarygracelutheran.com](mailto:office@calgarygracelutheran.com)). DO NOT come to the church building, at any time. Contact 8-1-1 for further instruction.**

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES**

Staff and Church Leadership will enforce and update these measures accordingly. Note: Social Distancing Measures may change without notice and are not limited to the following:

- All staff, congregants, visitors and facility users are asked to use the Alberta Health Services self-assessment tool prior to attending the building. And may be asked the same questions upon entering the building.
- Hand Sanitizing stations at entrance and exit for hand cleaning when both entering and exiting the building.
- You are required to wear a non-medical/medical face mask/covering when attending the church building.
- Limited access to certain areas of the building to ensure proper social distancing. (Signs are posted and doors may be closed. Do not enter area's that are closed or deemed off limits, etc.)

**Date of Issue:** June 16, 2020

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- Controlled and/or staggered entry into the building. Signs to be posted and ushers to assist with traffic flow, when required
- Congregants will be ushered to and from the pews and/or designated seating and/or asked to follow signage
- Physical distancing of 2 meters is to be observed in the building and should be observed when returning to vehicles/parking lot, between individuals not from the same household
- Infants and children must remain with their parents or guardians.
- Cohort Families may sit together with sufficient spacing between them and other cohort family groups.
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas, common areas, public washrooms
- Seating in the pews may be assigned to ensure social distancing,
- Services and activities will not include any form of food or beverages, exclusive of individual communion settings on designated Sunday's.
- Physical contact between congregants will be suspended, such as hand shaking, sharing of the peace, sharing of communal items, etc.
- Social activities are currently suspended, indoors
- Outdoor gatherings are only permitted as per the current government guidelines and must be preapproved by the leadership team
- Attendance/check-in is required
- Offering plates will be available at the entrance of the Sanctuary. Members are encouraged to continue the online giving. Mailing and/or dropping off your offering is acceptable as well.

### **Church Attendance**

Church attendance is regulated by the Government of Alberta Social Distancing Measures and church leadership.

- Online registration for attendance is required for anyone wanting to attend service. Once available spots are full, we are not able to allow more. Please let the church office know if you were not able to register.
- Register early to ensure your attendance
- Attendance for those without a computer to register – those who do not currently have access to a computer and are asked to contact the church office by telephone, to reserve their spot prior to Friday before the Sunday Worship Service
- Guests are allowed; however, they need to register their attendance just like a member would, and they are to adhere to our current policy(ies)
- Volunteers are required for ushering and after-service cleaning. Sign up for these positions are available on the online attendance site.

### **Entrances and Exits**

Entrances and exits will be marked and ushers will be available to direct people if required.

- ENTRANCE AND EXIT: North parking lot door (usher will assist, if needed and disinfect after use)

**Date of Issue:** June 16, 2020

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- UPSTAIRS DOORS: No access for Worship Services until further notice
- Floors will have marked out 2 meters (or more) spacing for people to wait upon entrance and/or exit of building.

### **Funerals**

Funerals are regulated by the Government of Alberta Social Distancing Measures and church leadership, at this time.

- Facemasks must be worn by all attendee's as per the City of Calgary Mandatory Mask By-law.
- No receptions are available to be held at Grace Lutheran Church at this time
- Coffee and/or other refreshments are not permitted
- 50 - person limit on indoor funeral services
- Registered attendance may be required (by funeral home or family. The church office may be able to assist with this, please inquire)

### **General Facility Use**

Any outside user group(s) will adhere to Government Policies and Guidelines, The Grace Lutheran Church COVID-19/Pandemics Policy as well provide their own policy/procedures for their members to follow – a copy will be provided to Grace Lutheran Church.

### **IF SOMEONE COMES TO THE CHURCH SICK OR WITH SYMPTOMS:**

If symptoms are noticed or present ("screening") such as fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose or difficult breathing and other symptoms, then:

- That person will not be permitted into the building or asked to leave if already in the building and advised to return home until cleared by a doctor
- If Alberta Health Services requests a list of attendees, due to a positive test, the church will provide such list.

Note: people may be carriers of the virus, without showing symptoms

***\*\*\* this policy and guidelines are subject to change, without notice \*\*\****