

Quick Guide for Attending Worship

Summary

As we prepare to return to in-person worship we want to share our safety plan. With their permission we are borrowing heavily from the excellent work that Bethel did prior to their return to in-person worship. This work is based on directives from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and in consultation with The Minnesota South District - LCMS (District).

We are asking for your cooperation as we prepare to transition to in-person worship. This guide is intended to give you simple instructions as we return to St. Stephanus. It is difficult to have to establish rules for our return to in person worship but for the safety of those we care about it is necessary.

Face coverings are required through the building. The only person without one will be Pastor during the service until the distribution of the elements. We ask that you do not remove yours except during the reception of the Lord's Supper.

Worship Options

There will be a transition period before we return to the traditional in-person worship that we long for. During the transition we will continue to focus on our on-line worship. As such, we will not have live music, live readings, or live children's message. There will be a "non-visual" element to in person worship for a portion of the service. During that time, we are encouraged to simply listen. We plan to begin slowly transitioning from full "Online" with people in attendance to full "In Person" that is streamed through the months ahead. They are two very different things.

Whether your needs are guided by a vacation, weather, illness, a reluctance to return to St. Stephanus during the pandemic, or for other reasons – our desire is to continue giving you options for staying connected.

If you would like some assistance on accessing the YouTube services or recordings please contact Dan Savard at danielsavard@mac.com or call the church office and leave a message for him at 651-228-1486.

Preparation for In-Person Worship

Before You Arrive at St. Stephanus

1. **Self-Check for Illness:** Please stay home if you or a member of your family are displaying signs of COVID-19, including symptoms like:

- fever [> 100.4 F],
- cough
- shortness of breath
- chills
- headache
- muscle pain
- sore throat
- loss of taste or smell
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

2. **At-Risk Persons:** For those with pre-existing health conditions and/or in certain age groups-know the risks and choose wisely as to whether to attend.
3. **Masks:** Those attending worship will be required to wear a mask. This requirement is for the protection of Pastor, worship assistance, and your fellow worshippers. If you don't have a mask we will have a limited supply of masks for your use.
4. **Water, Coffee & Refreshments:** We will not be offering after-worship refreshments (e.g., coffee, treats, etc.), nor will water fountains be available for use.

Reservation Process

Capacity Limits...To comply with guidelines related t

o capacity we are implementing a reservation system. Attendance at each service will be limited to 50 people. To make sure there are seats available when you arrive, we are implementing an online reservation system. Please log into:

<https://bookapew.com/app/mn/sslc> to reserve a pew.

Arriving at St. Stephanus - Worship in Sanctuary

1. **Physical Distancing:** Please maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and/or your family group and others.
2. **Pre-Service and Post-Service Visiting:** Weather permitting, please visit with friends outside of the building while maintaining physical distancing.
3. **Entering From the Parking Lot or From Blair:** We will be following a one-way pattern to enter and exit the building. Once in the building please move directly to the sanctuary following arrows and directions.
4. **Doors Propped Open:** Weather permitting, doors will be propped open to allow for contactless entry.
5. **Hand Sanitizer:** Hand sanitizer will be made available throughout the building for your convenience.
6. **Worship Bulletins:** We will not be providing bulletins or service folders. Bulletins will continue to be emailed out on Thursdays prior to Sunday services. It is your responsibility to print a hard copy for your use.
7. **Seating/Pews:** In accordance with Minnesota Department of Health physical distancing guidelines, pew/seating access will be limited. Please only sit in those spots designated. Please observe 6 feet of separation between family groups and/or individual attendees. Family groups are welcome to sit as close to each other as desired. To minimize exposure please fill available spots from the front of the church.
8. **Singing:** Out of an abundance of caution we will not be singing as a congregation. You are invited to follow along with the recordings and if you wish, hum along.
9. **Offering:** Will be received via plates available as you exit the Sanctuary. We are

grateful for gifts/offerings made via online means.

10. **Restrooms:** Due to MDH social distancing guidelines, restroom use will be limited to two individuals or one family at a time.
 - a. Those waiting to use the restroom are asked to queue outside the door, using the social distancing guides marked on the floor.

Celebration & Reception of Holy Communion

While the following protocols will be updated/amended as time continues, these will guide our restart of in-person worship...

1. **Follow Usher Invitation:** To go up to receive the elements. Stay in your seat as long as possible to avoid crowding the center aisle.
2. **Element Distribution:** We will be using wafers and individual cups for distribution of the elements.
 - a. The Pastor and Assistant will sanitize hands, wear glove(s) and mask for distribution of elements.
 - b. The Pastor will distribute the bread. The assistant will distribute the wine.
 - c. There will be a table and basket at each side aisle to collect to the used cups.
 - d. Sanitizer and/or wipes will be available for attendees to clean hands before and after receiving elements.
 - e. Children/those not receiving elements will be offered a verbal blessing.
3. **Return to Pews or Chairs:** Via the side aisles.

After Worship

1. **Exit:** The congregation will be dismissed from the back. Please follow the exit directions and move directly to the exits.
2. **After-Worship Visiting:** Weather permitting, please visit with friends outside of the building. Please observe social distancing particularly when inside the building.
3. **Bible Study & Sunday School:** Will continue to be held via Zoom at 11:00 AM. There should be plenty of time for you to return home in time to attend Bible Study or Sunday School.

Final Questions

1. Who do we contact if they have questions about this plan?

Please contact Dan Savard at danielsavard@mac.com or Pastor Thompson at pastor@saintstephanus.org. You may also leave a message for them on the church line at 651-228-1486.

2. What do we do if we test positive for Covid-19 after having been in the building?

Let us know as soon as possible after a positive test result so that we may inform any others who may have been in the service with you. This is part of the point of us registering for attendance. If there is someone who is positive that we are aware of, we will email you at the address you provided during the pew reservation with a notice that you may have been exposed.

Depending on circumstances, these plans may change and be revised. We will do our best to notify you when substantive changes take place.

THANK YOU for your patience and faithfulness during these challenging days!