

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH OPENING POLICY DURING CORONAVIRUS
Adopted by Church Council on June 15, 2020
Revised June 23, 2020

To St. Mark's Congregation: Please note that each member of St. Mark's will continue to have a choice of watching our service on line - **or** attending in person; starting on Sunday, July 5, 2020, at 8:00 AM or 10:30 AM. There will not be a Saturday evening service at this time.

Before coming to church, it is very important that

- If you are considered at risk in contracting the coronavirus, please consider remaining at home and worshipping online.
- If you have symptoms related to the coronavirus, or if you believe yourself to be ill, please do not come to in person worship. Take advantage of video worship.
 - Symptoms include Cough, Fever, and/or Shortness of Breath
- If you cannot be positive about keeping these guidelines and requests regarding in person worship, please remain at home and worship on line.

On-Line Services:

- Please note starting July 5th, the on-line service will be a recording of the Church Service.
- To allow time for those to prepare the video, the service will not be available until later in the day each Sunday.
- We do plan to send out an email to advise that it is available.

When you come to church

- **Safety:**
 - Safety of our staff and members is our highest concern.
 - We are following recommended guidelines by the CDC, PA Department of Health, and our Bishop which include wearing masks and social distancing.
 - Wearing gloves is at the discretion of the member (whatever makes you the most comfortable)
 - We apologize if this causes any inconveniences to our members.
- **Mask:**
 - Please note that masks are required. A medical excuse for not wearing a mask from your doctor will be honored. Your mask needs to be in place as you enter the church building, during worship (except when receiving communion) and as you exit the church building.
 - If you forget your mask, extra masks will be provided as you enter the church.
 - This includes any children over 2 years old.
 - Pastor Vasey, Sam Robinson, and guest vocalist may not wear masks during all or part of the service and will be safely distanced from one another and the congregation.

- **Hand Sanitizers:**
 - Hand sanitizers will be available as you enter church, in pews, outside the restrooms, and as you leave. Please use hand sanitizer.

- **Church Entrance:**
 - On Sunday morning, everyone must enter only through the Narthex door.
 - All other doors will be locked.
 - **Please go directly to your seat.**
 - All doors will be propped open when possible by the Ushers.
 - The Baptismal Font as you enter the Nave will be empty.

- **Church Exit:**
 - At the end of the service, everyone must exit at the left side of the Nave and thru the Handicap door by the Sacristy.
 - Please follow social distancing as you exit.
 - All doors will be propped open when possible by the Ushers as you leave.
 - Please do not go into other sections of the church (such as the hallways, Fellowship Hall, etc.)

- **Pews:**
 - All Hymnals, Bibles, pencils, etc. have been removed from the pews.
 - End of pews are marked to identify ones in which to sit. The Usher will advise you.
 - 8:00 Service will sit in different pews than the 10:30 Service.
 - Families or couples can sit together.
 - This is to adhere to Social distancing.
 - Examples of proper social distancing in a pew is designated by blue crosses on the rear facing pews at the back of the church.

- **Belongings** (coats, umbrellas, etc):
 - Please take all belongings with you to the Pew since we will be exiting from the front of the church.
 - If you bring a Bible, please be sure to take it with you when you leave.

- **Service:**
 - The length of the service will be purposely shortened.
 - Lectors will be scheduled. They will be “miked” and will read from their pew (in place).
 - Lectors will lead the intercessions from their pew (in place).
 - **Bulletins:**
 - Bulletins will be placed in the pews where you are asked to sit.
 - Hymns will be printed in the Bulletin. Hymns should sung **while wearing masks.**
 - Masks are required for participating in the liturgy
 - Please take bulletin home or discard in trash can when you exit.
 - We will NOT be reusing bulletins.
 - **Confession and Forgiveness:**
 - We will NOT be kneeling during this time.

- **Communion:**
 - Prepackaged elements for Holy Communion (cup with grape juice and a wafer), in a sealed bag, will be provided by the Ushers to each communing worshiper as he or she enters the Church.
 - Worshipers will take Communion at the same time while remaining in their pews.
 - Used or unused Communion items are to be placed back in the sealed bag, and placed in a designated container as you exit the church using the Sacristy door.
 - There will also be an Offering Basket at the Handicap (Sacristy) door in which to make an Offering as you exit the church.
 - You can contribute on Line (If you have any questions, contact church office.)
 - We will NOT be kneeling during this time.
- **Sharing of the Peace:** Due to social distancing, we will not share the Peace with physical contact.
- **Children**
 - Children are to remain in pews during children sermon.
- **Rest Rooms:**
 - Bathrooms will only be “open” in the Narthex
 - Please limit rest room use to extreme needs only
 - If you use the rest room, use the hand sanitizer before leaving the pew, and must wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving the rest room.
 - Please do not go into other parts of the church to use rest rooms.
- **Hospitality**
 - Due to Social Distancing, there will be no hospitality after each church service including coffee.
- **Environment:**
 - Windows:
 - When possible, windows in the Nave will be open and the rear exhaust fans turned on.
 - Cleaning:
 - Before the service, door handles & panic bars, vinyl table covering, trays, and rest rooms will be sanitized.
 - Pews and other wood surfaces will be cleaned after the 10:30 service and then be unoccupied for a minimum of 4 days to sanitize. Note: both services will sit in different pews.

St. Mark’s is taking important safety precautions for in person worship. If, however, you still are uncomfortable with these steps, please remember that online worship continues to be available through this pandemic.

6/22/2020 Update: Added note under “Church Entrance” about “The Baptismal Font as you enter the Nave will be empty.” Added note under “Confession and Forgiveness” and “Communion” about “ We will NOT be kneeling during this time.” Change wording under “Environment / Cleaning” for clarity.