

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Thank you for all the thoughtful feedback on re-opening services at Holy Cross. Under the new guidelines from Governor Walz, we plan to resume Sunday morning services starting on June 7th. For the near future, we will just have one service each Sunday, at 9:00 am.

This letter provides the criteria Pastor and the church leadership has developed together, to enable as many of us as possible to meet as safely as possible. We have considered issues of reverence, sanitation, social distancing, and amount of time spent in the church building.

We know some of these limitations will be unpopular, especially the lack of communion and singing and the use of masks. But we ask you to bear with us as we attempt to navigate through these times. We will also review these protocols periodically and adjust them as needed/possible.

Big picture, we will take a three-phase approach to re-opening:

- The **first phase** will be a simple church service without communion, without congregational singing, without handshaking or hugging, with masks, and with 6-foot social distancing between families.
- The **second phase** will add in communion and limited congregational singing, phased in as soon as possible.
- The **third phase** is fully-reopened services, when a Covid-19 vaccine is hopefully available.

This letter discusses our approach to the services in the **first phase**. Please read this letter through carefully, and let us know if you have any questions:

Before Service:

- + Please stay home if you are ill, showing symptoms of Covid-19, or concerned about your susceptibility to Covid-19. Likewise, if someone in your household is ill, please stay home.
- + Wash your hands often. Frequent and thorough hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- + The church will be disinfected before Sunday Service.
- + Because our church holds safely approximately 200 people, we believe that we can hold a single service during the summer months and will likely not exceed 25% of that capacity.
- + These protocols will be available in the church in printed form for distribution. Social distancing guidelines will also be posted.

Arriving for Service:

- + If we can obtain it, there will be hand sanitizer at the entrance to the building.
- + The entrance door from the parking lot will be propped open until service begins, to enable touchless entry.
- + You will need to wear a mask when entering and exiting the building, and throughout the service, in consideration of your fellow congregants. (Please bring your own mask from home. If forgetting your mask we will have a very limited supply available.)

- + Worship folders will be available but will need to be picked up on the tables in the sanctuary as the social distancing needs to be followed. Ushers will help assist in seating.
- + In order to maintain 6 feet of space between family groups, we will be roping off every other pew. The ushers will help direct people to appropriate places to sit.
- + It will be difficult, especially at first, but we will need to avoid shaking hands or hugging before the services. Please only greet each other observing the 6-foot social distancing indoors as well as outdoors.

During the Service:

- + There will be no communion at this time until safe practices can be initiated.
- + There will be no congregational singing. We will have limited music and hope to have a soloist to sing the hymn of the day.
- + Rather than taking an offering during the service, using plates that are passed from person to person, we will take the offering at the door following the service. Please remember that online giving is already available through our website.
- + We will all wear masks inside the church building. Pastor will wear a mask and conduct the service from the chancel and altar areas. During the spoken parts, if needed, His mask may be removed. He will also deliver the sermon from the pulpit during this time.

After the Service:

- + To help the congregation move out of the sanctuary more quickly while maintaining social distancing, Pastor will not greet people at the door as he has usually done at this time.
- + Please do not shake hands, hug, or touch people in greeting after the service, but do your best to maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
- + We'll need to use the bathrooms one family at a time. Doors should be left open normally, but closed when in use. Paper towels should be used when leaving the restroom to open the doors.
- + Please do not congregate in the narthex, but rather go outside on the grassy areas and knoll around the church to **briefly** greet one another.

Outside of the service:

- + We will continue live-streaming the Sunday morning service, for those who are unable to attend in person, and recordings of Sunday morning services will continue to be posted on the church web site.
- + As long as there are executive orders limiting large gatherings, we will continue to forego in-person group activities outside of the Sunday morning service until such orders are lifted and safety permits.
- + Please continue to pray for one another, for our congregation, and for me, your pastor.
- + Please also pray for our governor and for our community.

May our Lord keep us in His mercy. Amen.

Pastor Jobst & Holy Cross Elders and Officers