

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City, MN

updated 9/16/2020 - Phase 3 of "StaySafe MN"

First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City, MN is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our members, guests, and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, First Evangelical Lutheran Church has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and the Church Council are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church building and that requires full cooperation of our congregation. Through this cooperative effort we can establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our church building.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, the Church Council and the congregation are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity has the full support of the Church Council in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

First Evangelical Church is serious about safety and health and protecting our congregation. Our church members are our most important asset. The Church Council's involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved the Church Council in this process by soliciting and requesting Council suggestions and feedback. The Council's concerns have been addressed and have been integrated into developing this Preparedness Plan.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, available at the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current Executive Orders.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church has reviewed and incorporated industry guidance applicable to the church building provided by the state of Minnesota, including Safely Reopening Faith-Based Communities, Places of Worship, Weddings, and Funerals; Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies; Safe Celebrations and Events; Vehicle Gatherings, Parades, and Drive-ins. Other conditions and circumstances included in this guidance in the plan are specific to First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City. The Preparedness Plan for First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City addresses the following:

- Sick members, guests, and visitors;
- Social distancing and Hygiene;
- Building occupancy;
- Cleaning and disinfection;
- Building and ventilation;
- Deliveries;
- Screening and policies for staff exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Vehicle gatherings;
- Funerals and Weddings;
- Gatherings for Receptions and other activities;
- Communications and training.

Sick members, guests, and visitors

Members, guests, and visitors of the congregation have been informed of and are encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Attached to the main entrance of the Church are COVID-19 informational posters. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, headache, trouble breathing, chills, body aches, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, fatigue, diarrhea, and nausea or vomiting. First Evangelical Lutheran Church promotes that members, guests, and visitors to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves, or when caring for a member of their household. This Preparedness Plan recommends that congregation members, guests, and visitors at high risk and/or with underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged to not attend worship in the sanctuary. (Information about those at high risk and/or with underlying health conditions are available from your doctor, the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health.) Other options to worship are to choose staying in your vehicle and listening to 96.5 FM, or by worshipping on-line at home.

Anyone sick or experiencing symptoms within 14 days of being in the church building shall report to the pastor, council president, or church office. Those who may suddenly experience symptoms or sickness shall be quarantined in the youth room until safe transport home or to the hospital can be arranged. Such persons shall exit through the side (north) doors of the church.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City has also implemented a policy for members of the congregation to inform Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity will maintain confidentiality with that member's condition, unless the member allows otherwise. The member will be required to quarantine for the requisite amount of time according to the CDC, MDH, and MNOSHA. HIPPA Laws protect the privacy of a person's health procedures and status.

The church is not required but recommended to inform the congregation if a member of the congregation has been diagnosed with COVID-19, as a reminder to maintain safe practices. If there is evidence of COVID-19 spread within the church, it may be advised to stop offering in-person services until it is safe to return. The church will be informed by the county or state health department if Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) contact investigations identify a cluster of 3 or more families that have tested positive for COVID-19 and who report being at the same church event. Known cases have occurred at church functions and numbers have been increasing ("Faith-based Communities-Staying Safe" MDH Webinar from August 26, 2020).

There is always a risk to COVID-19 when the church gathers. Incidence of cases in our community will be monitored by reviewing the Weekly Report Data for Chisago County. This document includes data that is being used by schools in making decisions about their safe learning model. It is updated on Thursdays at 11 a.m. and shows the 14 day county level case rate per 10,000 people. Should the case rate exceed 20 per 10,000 worship will move to the parking lot (as weather allows). Should the case rate exceed 50 per 10,000 worship will be held online only.

Social distancing and Hygiene

Social distancing of at least six feet will be implemented and maintained between members, guests and visitors, but social distancing does not apply within family groups. People are required to stagger entering and exiting the Church in order to maintain the required six feet of social distancing. A designated entrance and exit door

will be marked to facilitate social distancing. A door attendant, wearing gloves and a face mask should be stationed at the front door to open the doors and identify the door to enter. The door attendant may have a counting device to limit the number of people to the safe capacity of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.

Per Executive Order (EO) 20-81, a face covering must be worn in all indoor businesses and public indoor spaces. Additionally, the EO requires staff to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. Face coverings may be removed while eating or drinking. Individuals that are exempt from wearing a face covering, due to meeting criteria of the Governor's EOs that include medical conditions, mental health conditions, children under two years of age, and disabilities shall discuss their situation, generally, with Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity at the earliest opportunity. Cloth face coverings are NOT a substitute for maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from other people.

Collective gatherings will be limited to allow for social distancing. There shall be a limited number of members, guests, and visitors using the restrooms. The restroom doors will remain open in order for people to assess the occupancy of the restroom to ensure social distancing. Members shall social distance when operating the copy machine and similar office equipment. In instances where face coverings cannot be worn, such as in hot kitchens, face shields that wrap around the face and extend below the chin may be used in place of cloth face coverings.

In the event EO 20-81 mandating the wearing of masks is lifted, everyone should be reminded to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Members, guests, and visitors are expected to dispose of tissues in no-touch trash bins.

Generally, once seated, there should be no moving from your place until the Church Service is over. The "no moving" does not apply to Sunday School Children and Sunday School Leaders who must leave the Sanctuary to attend class. Staggered movement by family group to the chancel for communion may be implemented as conditions permit. The "no moving" rule also does not apply to those who must use the restroom and when emergency situations exist.

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our Church at all times. Congregation members, guests, and visitors are advised to sanitize or wash their hands (at least 20 seconds with soap and water), especially at the beginning and end of the Church Service, and required after using the restroom. Hand-sanitizer and tissues are located near the Church entrance and locations in the Church so they can be used by staff, members, guests, and visitors.

There will be no congregational singing (soloists may be asked to perform by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity), and there will be minimal speaking by the Church Leaders. Singing or chanting is a higher-risk as it more forcefully expels respiratory droplets than speaking. The act of singing or chanting may contribute to transmission of COVID-19, possibly through emission of aerosols. It is strongly recommended that congregations offer pre-recorded music/chants or have only one cantor (or multiple cantors/singers as space allows at the front of the sanctuary, but no more than 6) at a distance of at least 12 feet from anyone else, while wearing a face covering. The Children's Word will be presented to the children, who will remain in their seats with family, by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity. Private conversations must be held outside of the church building. Initially there will be no Communion in the Sanctuary until a safe process is determined.

COVID-19 information, such as COVID-19 symptoms, wearing a mask, washing hands, and social distancing will be posted on the main entrance door. The congregation will be reminded of the safety and health items available through a verbal communication by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity through an announcement at the beginning of the Church Service. The Congregation will also be reminded with an annotation in the Church Bulletin and the Church Newsletter.

Building occupancy

Occupancy of sanctuary is 50% of the Fire Code Capacity. Fire Code Capacity is 220 which limits the Sanctuary capacity to 110 people (not including Church Service Leaders). These numbers are maximums and do not account for roping off areas due to the presence of soloists, praise band, etc. As overflow seating to the sanctuary, the Fellowship Hall is limited to 50 percent capacity of the Fire Code. Fire Code Capacity is 100 people which limits the Fellowship Hall to 50 people (8 family group tables with six chairs each). Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall (Phase 4 of Stay Safe MN only) shall take into account safe social distancing at all times. Quiet room/nursery is for single-family use only. Additional spaces for the quiet room (such as the library, fellowship hall, or empty classroom) shall be determined. The church is required to take attendance for all those who worship inside by use of the "Count Me In" form.

Cleaning and disinfection

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented in the Church, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, Church vehicles and areas in the Church environment, including restrooms, meeting rooms, and offices. Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting is being conducted by Church Staff.

Community drinking stations and water fountains should not be used. Drinking stations and drinking fountains shall be marked off. Sharing books, Hymnals, and religious texts by people from one service to the next does not pose a significant risk in spreading COVID-19. Personal equipment, items used in rituals or services, microphones, and phones should not be shared or, if shared, should be disinfected after each use.

All drivers of Church vehicles will be required to wear a face covering. Church vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected after each use. The Church vehicles will have protective supplies to include face coverings, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and gloves.

Building and ventilation

Operation of the church's building, including necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of the building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are maintained to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the building and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained by Church Maintenance Staff. The six thermostats (2 for sanctuary; 1 in entryway; 2 for classrooms; 1 for fellowship hall) should be placed in the "fan

on” position, instead of the “auto” position, when the church is occupied for constant ventilation. Two air exchange handlers for the sanctuary bring fresh air into the system whenever the air conditioners or furnaces are running. Both the furnaces and the air exchange handlers use pleated filters. We are still determining the hourly air exchange rate for our sanctuary (12 exchanges per hour are currently recommended by the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy). The two air handlers have an exchange rate of 1200 cubic feet per minute (CFM).

Deliveries

Delivery services to the church are expected to schedule appointments. If a service vehicle has arrived at the church, the vendor is to wait outdoors, and phone the church, until a representative from the Church can assist the vendor. Six feet of social distancing shall be maintained at all times and all persons interacting during the process must wear face coverings for the duration of the encounter.

Screening and policies for staff exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Faith Leaders, employees, and volunteers associated with the faith-based community, including those responsible for using the facility for support groups or other activities must complete a health screening survey upon arrival at First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City. Staff must be stopped from entering the building if their health screening indicates symptoms of COVID-19 and should be sent home immediately. If there is evidence of COVID-19 spread within the church, it may be advised to stop offering in-person services until it is safe to return.

With guidance from the Personnel Committee appointed by the Church Council, First Evangelical Lutheran will implement leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

The FFCRA requires certain employers to provide employees with expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. The expanded family and medical leave provisions of FFCRA apply to certain public employers and to private employers with fewer than 500 employees. Small businesses with fewer than 50 employees may qualify for exemption from the requirement to provide leave due to school closings or child care unavailability if the leave requirements would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern. Also, health care providers and emergency responders can be excluded.

Generally, FFCRA provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for:

- *two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid leave at the employee’s regular rate of pay (up to \$511 a day and \$5,110 in the aggregate), where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to federal, state or local government order or advice of a health care provider) and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or*
- *two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid leave at two-thirds the employee’s regular rate of pay (up to \$200 a day and \$2,000 in the aggregate), where the employee is unable to work because of a*

bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to federal, state or local government order or advice of a health care provider) or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19; and

- *up to an additional 10 weeks of expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay (up to \$200 a day and \$10,000 in the aggregate), where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.*

("Worker Protections Related to COVID-19" [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/MN_worker_protections_related_to_COVID_19.pdf) Accessed on 9/14/20 at https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/MN_worker_protections_related_to_COVID_19.pdf)

For the pastor, provision for partial disability thereafter (if needed) and as coordinated with PORTICO Benefit Services is recommended. Accommodations for staff with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions will be implemented as needed.

First Evangelical Lutheran has also implemented a policy for informing staff and volunteers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. All known persons to have come into contact with the exposed person shall be notified by the pastor or council president. The church council shall also be informed and, if needed, the entire congregation.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information. Any relevant health information shall be shared with and kept confidential by the pastor.

Vehicle gatherings

Holding car gatherings for events is one way to socialize or celebrate more safely and still slow the spread of COVID-19. Executive Order 20-81 requires workers to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. The vehicle gathering event must be managed. A traffic flow pattern must be created as to how vehicles will enter and exit the site. A six foot distance must be maintained between vehicles with open windows. Outdoor music leaders and groups are allowed but must maintain social distancing, even during the performance. The number of speakers must be limited and arrangements made so they maintain distance from others. Encourage no more than one household per vehicle. Carpooling does not comply with social distancing and attendees should not change vehicles during the event. Discourage those who are high risk from attending. Avoid excessive vehicle idling and exposure to exhaust fumes.

Funerals and Weddings

As with regular sanctuary worship, occupancy for funerals and weddings must be reduced to allow for the required social distancing of at least six feet between people who do not live in the same household.

The church maintains a separate policy, "Funerals During COVID-19", available on the church's website or by request from the church office. Ushers shall be enlisted to assist with staggered entrances to the narthex, sanctuary, as well as guidance to exits. Use of the fellowship hall for a meal following the funeral shall be for the

family only. Capacity is limited to 25% of the fire code indoors (25 people), however, additional outside patio seating is available. Food must be served carefully under the guidance of WELCA and in line with standard food safety practices.

The church also maintains a separate wedding handbook outlining procedures for the wedding rehearsal and additional rooms to be used.

Gatherings for Receptions and other activities

Gatherings taking place indoors and outdoors that are providing food and beverages for on-site consumption have an occupant limit of 25 percent of the fire code indoors, with a maximum of 250 people indoors or outdoors. The fellowship hall has a capacity limit of 25 persons, narthex 20 people, and outdoor patio 50 people.

All other regular church and associated activities (Quilting, Bible Study, Confirmation, Sunday School, Youth Group, Boy Scouts, meetings, etc.) shall have a general limit of 10 people per event. All groups are required to add their gathering on the church calendar and record their attendance with the church office. Worship services, weddings, and funerals are the only permitted exceptions to the "Rule of 10" in Minnesota's Phase 3 Stay Safe Plan for churches. Adaptations to this rule (such as separated groups using multiple rooms for the same activity) must be approved by Pastor Nathan and the Church Council.

Communications and training

All Leadership and Staff must be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure, as well as applicable policies, procedures, and practices. The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan must be posted in easily accessible locations and is shared with and reviewed by all staff. Posting may be done through electronic dissemination of the plan to all staff as long as the staff has access to review the electronic posting.

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was first communicated to Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and to the Church Council. All questions and concerns were discussed and appropriate changes were made to this document. When First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City opens the Sanctuary for worship, the congregation will be communicated to in person (to those members attending the Church Service), the Church Bulletin, the Church Newsletter, and broadcast on 96.5 FM (the Church transmission frequency) for those members who choose to remain in their vehicles.

Answers will be provided to all members who did not receive initial information concerning the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and additional reminders to staff and members of the faith-based organization will occur periodically. Additional communication to Church members will be ongoing by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and the Church Council. Members, guests, and visitors will be continuously reminded about protections including social distancing practices; requirements regarding the use of face-coverings; hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and deliveries. All members, guests, and visitors will be advised not to enter First Evangelical Lutheran Church if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and the Church Council are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. All members, guests, and visitors are expected to take an active role and collaborate in

carrying out the various aspects of this plan. Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and the Church Council will update the protections, work-practices and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity and the plan was posted throughout the Church and made readily available to members, guests, and visitors. It will be updated as necessary by Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity. Pages seven and eight contain websites that may be used to obtain further information.

This Preparedness Plan for First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City is certified by the Plan Administrator who is Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity.

Signature of Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity: [ON FILE]

Date Signed: September 16, 2020

General

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus (COVID-19) – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus

State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – <https://mn.gov/covid19>

Businesses

CDC: Resources for businesses and employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC: General business frequently asked questions – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

CDC: Building/business ventilation – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: Businesses and employers: COVID-19 – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

MDH: Health screening checklist – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: Materials for businesses and employers – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): COVID-19 information and resources – <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/>

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 – www.dli.mn.gov/updates

Federal OSHA – www.osha.gov

Handwashing

MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages – www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html

Social distancing

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

Housekeeping

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

State of Minnesota: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/get-tested/index.jsp>

Training

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html

Federal OSHA: www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf