

Restarting Public Worship Protocol Zion Lutheran Church, Hopkins, Minnesota

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at Zion,

As other public spaces open up and interpersonal interactions take place publicly, it is felt our congregation can resume offering public worship in a safe and orderly way. The following protocols have been developed based on current guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), State and local public health authorities, our own Lutheran Church Missouri Synod leadership and Zion's staff and members of the congregation. We assume adjustments and adaptations will still need to be made as time progresses due to changing circumstances.

BEGINNING WORSHIP: July 11 & 12, 2020

Our first public service back in the sanctuary will be on Saturday, July 11th at 5:00 pm and then on Sunday, July 12th at 8:30 a.m. (*The long term intent is to return to a three service schedule when we are able*) We will continue to offer on-line worship and pastoral devotions each week. (See our website www.zionhopkins.org for a link to our YouTube channel) We will also continue to mail out a CD or DVD of each week's worship service to those who do not have internet access.

Sunday School, Table Talks, Fellowship Hour and all other onsite meetings will continue to be postponed until it is determined safe to gather in groups again.

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals... can occur after July 12, 2020 upon adherence to all safety protocols delineated in our guidelines.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS:

If you are in a high-risk category because of underlying health conditions or a senior (65+), please do not feel compelled to attend public worship services until you feel comfortable with the potential health risk. Guard your health. Recorded services will continue to be available on our congregational website (www.zionhopkins.org) via our YouTube channel or we would be happy to mail you a CD or DVD of each week's service. If you are in any of the risk categories and still wish to attend services, you are certainly welcome to do so, being aware of the potential risks which may be involved. You are urged to please stay home if you or someone in your household is ill or has COVID-19 symptoms.

Padded chairs, pew cushions, hymnals and Bibles are being removed and stored elsewhere. The Baptismal Font will remain empty.

The worship space will be thoroughly sanitized before and after each service, including all entryways and doors, plus the restrooms and the elevator. Hand sanitizer will be available at entryways.

If leadership becomes aware of a clear, immediate, and imminent threat to the safety of the attendees or determines the above mentioned protocols cannot be observed, the gathering will be cancelled until the protocols can be observed.

Masks - Out of brotherly concern for our fellow worshippers all worshippers are required to wear a protective facemask per the CDC and state recommendations. We will provide facemasks for those unable to obtain one themselves. We have child size, too. Please bring and wear your facemask each week.

Offering - Collection plates and Friendship registers will not be passed person to person. Offerings will be received at the entrance door in a collection plate provided by Zion. If you have new or changed information, please contact the church office.

ARRIVING AT CHURCH:

After parking your car proceed to the double glass doors where a member of the Welcome Team will assist you into the building helping to maintain a 6 foot social distance and securing a facemask. The 5th Avenue and kitchen door will not be available for use.

Visiting and greeting one another should be done outside, observing appropriate social distancing. Greet with a friendly wave, a head nod, a smile (*when facemasks go away*).

Please do not wait for loved ones in the Gathering Area/Lobby/Entryway but proceed into the sanctuary where a member of the Host Team will assist you to a pew.

Seating - Although our worship seating capacity is 308 individuals we are limited to a much smaller number due to the need to maintain a 6 foot social distance precaution. Worshippers will be seated appropriately by a member of the Host Team in every third pew. Please be aware you may not be able to sit in your favorite spot.

When the number of worshippers exceeds our seating capacity in the sanctuary, the worship service can be viewed via our in-house online broadcast which will be displayed on large screen monitors throughout the building. The over-flow seating is located downstairs in the Fellowship Hall and upstairs in classrooms 205 and 207.

Children at worship - We are pleased to have children at worship. The quiet activity bags will not be available at this time, please bring some activities from home if needed. The "Children's Room" in the rear of the church is available for use. Nursery care will not be available at this time.

Restrooms - Only the upstairs restrooms will be available for use. One person at a time may enter a restroom. A member of the Host Team will monitor the door to maintain social distancing.

DURING THE SERVICE:

Order of Worship - The worship service will be projected onto the front screen. We will not be using hymnals or a printed order of worship. The weekly newsletter will be distributed during dismissal for those who would like one.

Music/singing - Congregational singing will be temporarily discontinued, please refrain from singing. A Cantor (*song leader*) will sing the hymns on our behalf. A combination of instrumental music, solos, duets or small choir ensembles may also be used to provide music at a worship service.

Holy Communion - will be offered on the 1st and 3rd weekends of the month to each communicant via a single continual line (*maintaining 6 foot distance*) from the center aisle and returning to his/her seat via the side aisles. The Pastors will wear plastic gloves and facemasks as they serve communion.

Dismissing - At the conclusion of the service a member of the Host Team will direct the dismissal of the worshippers one row at a time to maintain proper social distancing.

AFTER THE SERVICE:

Pastoral Greeting - The Pastor will greet the worshipers from outside the church at the entrance door with a wave or nod while maintaining the appropriate social distancing.

Please wait for loved ones outside the church building where visiting and greeting can take place.

We recognize the restart of onsite worship is going to be very different from what worship looked like the last time we gathered and we thank you for abiding by these protocols. We look forward to seeing everyone very soon! Please continue to be praying for God's wisdom and blessing upon each of us and our congregation.

May God grant us peace and joy in Him! Amen.

-- Your Pastors & Staff