

Norway Grove Memorial Lutheran Church  
Policy & Procedures For  
Gathering In The Building For  
Worship & Activities  
In a Time of Global Pandemic.

Council Approved Date March 8, 2021

Noted in Council Minutes for month of March, 2021

## Norway Grove Memorial Lutheran Church Policy and Procedures for Gathering in The Building During a Time of Covid-19

We are beginning the process of gathering in the church building for worship after almost a year hiatus due to COVID-19! We have missed seeing people face to face, and we are excited to gather in person once again. There are many directives we believe will make gathering the safest it can be for all parishioners who attend in-person worship. The biggest change we will make is limiting the number of people allowed in our sanctuary space to 50 people. While Public Health Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) order #14 allows for a much higher number of people to gather, we believe it is imperative to decrease the risk of transmitting the virus which is done when we physically distance family units. We will do our best to accommodate everyone. If these guidelines do not work for you and your family, we invite you to continue to worship at home for the safety of all.

*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. ~Matthew 25:40*

# PHASES

## **Begin Phase Orange**

Palm Sunday, 2021, policy and procedures addressed here.

## **Begin Phase Yellow**

Consider Wednesday Evening worship in the church building.

## **Begin Phase Green**

Consider opening the building for groups, education and limited fellowship.

Worship from home via our livestream format if:

- You have COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- You are ill with flu-like symptoms.
- You are susceptible to complications from the virus.
- You have a temperature over 100.4 degrees F (we highly encourage you to take your temperature before coming to church!).
- You live with someone who has any of the above.

Please note that these guidelines are supported by the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the South Central Wisconsin Synod ELCA Bishop, the Center for Disease Control, and several area churches.

1. **MASKS:** All parishioners will wear masks for the entire service. Pastor and Musicians will not be wearing masks during the service in order to be understood when talking or singing, and those of us in worship leadership positions will maintain a minimum 6 foot distance from parishioners while not wearing a mask. When close to parishioners, worship leaders will wear a mask. We encourage you to bring a mask from home, and then launder it for the next usage. We will have disposable masks available for you to use.
2. **SEATING:** Reservations will be made and required to attend worship, to ensure we do not exceed our capacity, and to provide us with a list of people present. Names of attendees will be recorded so that we may contact everyone personally in the event of someone testing positive after attending a service. An usher will guide you to a pew. We will seat people from the front of the sanctuary to the back. Please keep personal items such as coats with you in the pew. At the conclusion of the service, ushers will dismiss worshippers by row starting at the back of the church.
3. **PHYSICAL DISTANCING:** We will physically distance every FAMILY UNIT 6 feet away from other family units in the pews. We will not be “policing” whether or not you are sitting with immediate family, but trust that you are being safe!
4. **SINGING:** There can be no congregational singing if you choose to worship with us in person. Songs will have to be

internalized. This is to prevent the aerosol droplets that spread a further distance when singing.

5. **BATHROOMS:** Everyone will use the bathrooms located in the upper level of the church. Please follow the instructions posted in the bathroom for cleaning when you are done.
6. **ELEVATOR:** Elevator use is not changed, and there would not need to be a need for it as people are asked to stay on the sanctuary level.
7. **OFFERING:** Plates for the offering will be located at the entrance. Kindly leave your envelope in the offering plate as you enter or exit the sanctuary.
8. **COMMUNION:** Pre-wrapped single-service gluten free communion elements will be ordered and available for pickup as you enter the sanctuary.
9. **DISINFECTING:** The church will be fully disinfected between services with industrial-strength, CDC-recommended cleaning supplies. All surfaces will be wiped down, and all door handles and bathroom facilities will be fully cleaned. We have hand sanitizer at each entrance/exit. Doors to the upper lot will be propped open to limit the number of times they are touched, and windows may be open to encourage air to circulate.
10. **BOOKS:** There will be no hymnals or bibles in the pews. All literature you will need will be shared via E-mail or put on the projector.

- 11. FELLOWSHIP:** Fellowship will cease until we are in a phase which will accommodate more than gathering in person for worship.
- 12. BUILDING ACCESS:** Access to all other rooms in the church building are restricted during worship services to limit the need for additional cleaning. Of course, church staff, the church treasurer, and scheduled counters will be able to enter the church office. The building will be open only for Worship.
- 13. MOVE FORWARD:** Weekly monitoring of new COVID-19 cases will occur. The first week a decrease in numbers starts the clock for determining 4 consecutive weeks of decreased numbers. An increase in numbers will result in restarting the clock at the next weekly report of decreased numbers. After 4 consecutive weeks of decreased numbers, discussion occurs and a decision is made as to when Phase Yellow is implemented.
- 14. MOVE BACKWARD:** The first week an increase in numbers starts the clock for determining 3 consecutive weeks of increased numbers. A decrease in numbers will result in restarting the clock at the next report of increased numbers. A reporting of 3 consecutive weeks of increased numbers will result in an immediate move to virtual only or parking lot worship.

## **PHASE     Yellow**

1. **WORSHIP:** Sunday morning worship continues as noted in phase Orange. Cleaning will occur after the Sunday morning worship and prior to Wednesday night worship. Cleaning will occur after the Wednesday evening worship. Wednesday Evening worship will follow all procedures stated in Phase Orange.
2. **EDUCATION:** During Phase Yellow, the church building will be open only for Worship on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. Education and limited fellowship will not occur in the building until we reach Phase Green.
3. **MOVE FORWARD:** Weekly monitoring of new COVID-19 cases will occur. The first week a decrease in numbers starts the clock for determining 4 consecutive weeks of decreased numbers. An increase in numbers will result in restarting the clock at the next weekly report of decreased numbers. After 8 consecutive weeks of decreased numbers, discussion occurs and a decision is made as to when Phase Green is implemented.
4. **MOVE BACKWARD:** The first week an increase in numbers starts the clock for determining 3 consecutive weeks of increased numbers. A decrease in numbers will result in restarting the clock at the next report of increased numbers. A reporting of 3 consecutive weeks of increased numbers will result in an immediate move to virtual only or parking lot worship.





## **Phase Green**

We will be developing a Phase Green policy as recommendations from PHMDC are updated with the changing status of the pandemic. We anticipate that Phase Green will follow all procedures noted in Phase Yellow above.

Thank you for your diligence and patience. By following these guidelines, we can worship in a space that's safe for the most vulnerable members of our congregation, still see one another face to face, and be together again. We continue to grieve our loss of fellowship, singing, and human touch, but we will be together.