Plan to Regather

*Christ Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool Health Plan, Phase 4*
*rev. February, 2021*

**Overview and Introduction**

With the recent introductions of COVID vaccines into our county, and as infection rates continue to rise and fall, Christ Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool continue to monitor relevant advice, guidance, metrics, and best practices. While we are all hopeful for a coming return to “normal,” meaning without restrictions, the best guidance continues to caution us that restriction-free gatherings remain some distance ahead. This document revision, and ongoing reassessment and evaluation, reflects our evolving structures and planning for our public ministries.

Through our prayer, reflection, consultation and study, our primary guiding conviction continues to follow the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery’s expression in “Healthy at God’s House”:

> The first question for spiritual leaders is not so much when shall we return for in-person worship, but how will we make sure that whenever we return for in-person worship that we will do so in ways that build up the body and show love for our neighbor—all of our neighbors?

Because Christ Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool serve and include members and families of all ages, health conditions and circumstances, *we will continue to place our vulnerable members, neighbors, and friends as most important in our decision-making.* While vulnerable populations include those over 65 and with underlying health issues, we are increasingly aware of the ways COVID-19 can impact children, youth, and adults of all ages; the increasing availability of vaccinations, and the gradually increasing safety they provide, do not change this focus. *Until our whole community is able to gather safely, we are not at “normal” ministry, and on behalf of our most vulnerable beloveds, we voluntarily continue restrictions to maintain their safety.*

**General Principles**

1. If you don’t feel well, stay home!
2. If you receive a positive COVID-19 test, please inform us immediately. We will inform the congregation and preschool community while protecting your identity.

3. As vaccination increases, the expectation is that all persons, vaccinated or not, will follow stated safety guidelines when present at CLC.

4. We will cooperate with the Porter County Health Department in all Contact Tracing efforts.

5. We will follow guidance from the ELCA and Indiana-Kentucky Synod, the CDC and the Porter County Health Department.

6. We will continuously monitor Porter County COVID-19 health data and current recommendations from state and local health, governing, and denominational authorities.

7. The CLC Council Executive Committee, in consultation with Staff and the full Council, will make any determination of evolving our restrictions and activities.

8. Little Lamb Preschool has developed its own COVID-19 Policies and Procedures, which we understand to enhance and expand the provisions in this Plan to Regather with specific focus on early childhood education and formation. LLP will adhere to its Policies and Procedures as an extension of our Plan to Regather.

9. Please note this Plan to Regather is a flexible document that will change and adapt as circumstances warrant.

In the event of a COVID-19 infection in the congregation, with recent in-person participation:

- The Porter County Health Department (PCHD) will be notified, and we will follow their suggestions and cooperate with contact tracing
- Programs, groups, events the person participated in recently will be temporarily suspended, pending suggestions from PCHD.
- The congregation will be notified of the COVID incidence, while protecting the identity of the person infected.

In the event of a COVID-19 infection in the staff:

- Staff who test positive are expected to follow all recommendations from their doctor and the Porter County Health Department (following current CDC guidelines).
- The congregation will be informed of any situation that will directly impact programming available at CLC.
- Members of the congregation who may have been exposed to COVID-19 by a staff member will be contacted by CLC.
CLC Regathering Plan:
Note that the following phases are not linear, and we may move between them in any direction as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safer at Home</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>CLC Health Plan (v.1) Stage 3</em></td>
<td><em>Limited</em>&lt;br&gt;75 outdoors, 25 indoors</td>
<td><em>Hybrid</em>&lt;br&gt;Livestream/online with in-person capacities in accordance with county metrics and CLC decision-making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Guidelines**

- All Worship/School/Meetings suspended, excepting Men’s Shelter
- No meetings held in church facilities
- All congregation invited to participate in online worship opportunities
- Church and LLP staff will be in contact with health authorities on steps moving forward.

- Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or concerned they may have been exposed, are asked to stay home. Please contact the Pastors.
- Home is still safest. The kinds of interaction we treasure at church are the kinds that are most likely to transmit the virus. Any in-person gatherings will be substantially different from “the usual.”
- In-person gatherings that happen will be outside if at all possible; some may be cancelled in cases of bad weather.
- Gatherings should not exceed 75 outdoors, and 25 indoors.
- Minimum six-foot distancing is always expected, outdoors and indoors
- Masks mandatory if indoors, recommended if outdoors. Masks

- All provisions and decision-making will continue to be, at minimum, in accordance with PCHD’s posted guidelines for social gatherings at a given color code, and will also take into account further guidance from our Synod and other authorities.
- As vaccination increases, the expectation is that all persons, vaccinated or not, will follow stated safety guidelines when present at CLC.
- Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or concerned they may have been exposed, are asked to stay home. Please contact the Pastors.
- Indoor programming/worship usage resumes with appropriate safety modifications and limits to gathering size to allow distancing and other safety measures.
| Will be available for those who need them.  
| No food should be served inside.  
| The church office must be given advance notice of gatherings of any size at CLC, and organizers will use a registration process/sign-in sheet to record attendance.  
| Any indoor meetings take place in the Church Hall, Gathering Area, or Activity Center (encouraging airflow with open doors)  
| High-risk folks invited to stay home and safe  
| Restroom usage will limit the number who may enter at the same time, define routes to and from, doors should remain propped open.  
| Group organizers asked to sanitize surfaces and areas used. Wipes and materials will be provided.  
| An individual’s in-person presence at the CLC facility for any reason implies their consent for staff to share their contact information in any contact tracing efforts related to possible COVID-19 exposure | Minimum six-foot distancing is always expected, outdoors and indoors.  
| Individual rooms have posted capacity limits - those wishing to meet at church should be in touch with the office to arrange for an appropriate meeting space.  
| Masks are mandatory if indoors, recommended if outdoors. Masks will be available for those who need them.  
| Continue logging persons present in building/at activities and registration, to facilitate potential contact tracing.  
| Group organizers asked to sanitize surfaces and areas used. Wipes and materials will be provided.  
| An individual’s in-person presence at the CLC facility for any reason implies their consent for staff to share their contact information in any contact tracing efforts related to possible COVID-19 exposure |
Worship

Recommendations and guidelines from the ELCA, CDC, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, and Indiana Department of Health continue to indicate that risk mitigation steps for in-person worship affect every aspect of our worshipping lives. Because such central things as group singing and sharing of communion will likely be severely curtailed, our central worship gathering will continue to be Sunday Morning Livestream.

- Livestreams will continue to be produced and provided, including Communion.
- We will experiment and explore outdoor in-person worship opportunities:
  - Guidelines for safety will be maintained (see I-K Synod & ELCA guidelines)
  - Numbers will be restricted, and a sign-up system implemented
  - Physical distancing maintained at all times
  - No in-person communion
  - No singing
  - No unison speech.
  - No contact while sharing the Peace.

Our Sunday Morning Livestream continues as our primary worship gathering. In-person opportunities are added, with all appropriate precautions in effect, as current guidance and Porter County health rates allow.

- Pre-registration is required, masks are mandatory from the parking lot back to our cars.
- Seating is adjusted to maintain appropriate physical distancing, and capacity is reduced appropriately. 3 empty seats or 6’ of pew should be maintained between family groups.
- Self-service hand sanitizer stations are available.
- HVAC fans are on at all times, with UV sanitizers.
- All worship leaders, musicians, servers, lectors, ushers, etc. will be masked.
- No bulletins will be used; hymnals and other materials are removed from the Sanctuary.
- No offering plates are passed; baskets are available at the back of the worship space.
- Our liturgy is adjusted according to denominational and health department guidelines: no unison singing or supported speech,
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLC Meetings, Small Groups, Committees</th>
<th>Weekday Building Access</th>
<th>Communion will be distributed at stations without contact; servers will be masked and will use hand sanitizer immediately prior.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Via webconference, phone, or postponed</td>
<td>- Building is closed</td>
<td>- In-person ministry meetings scheduled at various times as can be done safely</td>
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<td>- Via webconference, phone, or in person - preferably outdoors; in the Gathering Space/Church Hall/Activity Center with log to register and ventilation</td>
<td>- Individual visits to the facility are permitted as pre-arranged with office</td>
<td>- Logs for attendance maintained</td>
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<td>- Group organizers asked to sanitize surfaces and areas used. Wipes and materials will be provided.</td>
<td>- Individual guests to the building continue using Door 3 and will sign in and out.</td>
<td>- Contactless gestures for the Peace and greeting one another.</td>
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<td>- Funerals: At church or on location; attendance is limited, distancing and building usage guidelines observed, and live streaming offered. No visitations held at CLC at this time.</td>
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<td>- Baptisms: By appointment; can be held in the sanctuary during Sunday livestream; font is cleaned before and after. Attendance will be limited and distancing maintained. Can also be a part of outdoor worship experiments.</td>
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<td>- Weddings: follow parameters for worship</td>
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<td>- No passing Offering Plates.</td>
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<td>- Single-use bulletins and/or personal electronic devices used. No hymnals used.</td>
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<th><strong>Ministry with Children</strong></th>
<th><strong>Youth Ministry</strong></th>
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| ● LLP will transition to an online learning format. | ● Meet online, no in-person meetings or activities  
   ● Fusion, Circle, and Confirmation continue to meet as scheduled |
| ● Nursery service is suspended.  
   ● Sunday School remains suspended with online experiences provided.  
   ● Vacation Bible School - online and packets will be distributed for at home experiences.  
   ● Children in (outdoor and experimental) worship must also maintain physical distancing.  
   ● Little Lamb Preschool has developed its COVID-19 Policies and Procedures, and will adhere to them as an extension of this Plan to Regather. | ● Meet in-person outdoors and online  
   ● Mandatory masking, physical distancing, and regular hand washing at all activities  
   ● Fusion, Circle, and Confirmation continue to meet online primarily,  
   ● Meeting in-person indoors and outdoors with restrictions  
   ● Mandatory masking, distancing, and regular hand washing at all activities |
| ● Nursery service is suspended.  
   ● Sunday School remains suspended with online experiences provided.  
   ● Vacation Bible School - outdoor, evening, family, and multigenerational.  
   ● Children in (outdoor and experimental) worship must also maintain physical distancing.  
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<th><strong>Staff</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fusion, Circle, and Confirmation</strong></th>
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| ● Available via social media, phone, e-mail and video chat | ● Staff working from home  
● Staff only present in building for limited essential work (worship, counting, mail, facilities maintenance)  
● Work-from-home continues to be available for all staff members; working in the office is also available, with proper safety provisions.  
● Physical distancing guidelines should be maintained at all times.  
● Staff will wear a mask when moving throughout the building, or visiting another office. While working alone in their own office, their mask may be removed.  
● No drop-in office hours available.  
● Staff meetings can be held online, by phone, or in Gathering Space or on Patio.  
● Staff who eat lunch in the building should maintain 6 feet of distance | ● Fusion, Circle, and Confirmation resume programming indoors, meeting online as needed.  
● No food should be served inside. |

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<th><strong>Non-CLC meetings and building usage (Shelter, Voting, etc.)</strong></th>
<th><strong>● Hospital and Nursing Home visits on a case-by-case basis and as permissible</strong></th>
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|  | **● Staff should be consulted in planning, permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis**  
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**Bibliography and References**

“Church Music in the Age of COVID-19”,


