

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for French River Lutheran Church

**French River Lutheran Church (FRLC) Council and Pastor Mark Peters would like to convey that you are not obligated in any way to come into the building for worship. If you have members of your family that are in the high-risk categories, we strongly encourage you to remain at home and continue to view the service through the live stream over YouTube. The service will also continue to be recorded and posted for later viewing. However, if you chose to come into the building the following rules will apply:**

## **IF YOU ARE SICK DO NOT COME TO CHURCH!**

FRLC is committed to providing a safe and healthy church building for all our staff and congregants. To ensure we have a safe and healthy atmosphere, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members and paid staff are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church building and our community, and that requires full cooperation among our staff and church members. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our staff and building. Members and paid staff are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. FRLC staff and volunteers have full council support in enforcing the provisions of this policy. We are serious about safety and health at FRLC. Everyone's involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. FRLC Council has worked through the details required to keep everyone safe as we return to worship and other uses for our building. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19, the current orders from the governor of our state, and addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- controls for social distancing
- cleaning, disinfecting, decontamination and ventilation
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons
- communications and training that will be provided to staff
- communications and instructions for members.

### **Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

Staff have been informed of and are required to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess our staffs' health status prior to entering the church and for staff to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

All staff that have become ill during the COVID epidemic will need to report this illness to the church president and will be restricted from entering the building for a period of 14 days or following a negative COVID test if they chose to get tested prior to the end of the 14 days.

FRLC has also implemented a policy for informing staff and members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at church, and staff would be required to quarantine for the required amount of time.

Should a report of confirmed COVID happen within the church community, all members and staff will receive notice promptly via email or by postal mail if no email is on file. Notice will also be posted on both primary entrances to the building.

FRLC will protect the privacy of any individuals who contract the virus in accordance with HIPPA policies.

### **Handwashing**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our church and need to be adhered to. Staff and congregants are encouraged to wash their hands prior to coming to the church building. Staff and congregants are required to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after using the restroom. Staff will be required to wash hands at the beginning and end of their time at church and after using the restroom. Congregants are requested to wash or sanitize their hands prior to coming to church. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (with greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the church so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Handwashing is always preferred over the use of sanitizer. Property Committee will be tasked with ensuring that supply of sanitizer and soap continues to meet the needs of the church. Use of the bathroom facilities must be kept to one person/family in the restroom at a time to maintain social distance.

### **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

All visitors to church are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face (in particular their mouth, nose and eyes) with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all in each of the restrooms. Posters describing how to properly wash hands will be posted in each of the restrooms. Posters stating the need for those that are ill not to enter the building will be posted at each of the entrances. Should someone who is clearly ill attempt to enter the building ushers or staff will need to ask those individuals to leave for the good of all the other members. Should excessive coughing and sneezing be recognized during service the ushers will need to approach those members and ask them to leave the building. Transmission of audio over FM broadcast will also be provided if the member chooses to finish the service in their personal vehicle.

## **Social distancing**

Social distancing of six feet will be implemented and maintained between all visitors to the building through the following administrative controls:

Upon entry to the church masks will be required by all congregants for service on Sundays. The lower doors will remain closed during this time to allow for screening of all incoming members through the primary doors.

Distancing of 6 feet and masks will be required for all participants of meetings at the church.

Those members participating in the service will not have the requirement of masks while participating at the front of the church. These members will be distanced more than 12' from the congregants during times of speaking. Care should be taken to not touch the microphones used by other members.

Singing as part of worship will not be allowed by congregants as it has been shown that distancing of 12' or more would be necessary to accommodate this. Singing by the choir or other special music would be allowed at the front of the building only and with a max size of 4 people who would be 12' from members of other families.

It is the Council's hope that the bell choir and other special music arrangements would be utilized during this time.

Ushers will be utilized to seat members every other pew and will need to usher members out following the conclusion of service. Pews not to be used will be clearly marked as such in order to maintain social distance. Seating other than pews will be arranged in a way as to distance members a minimum of 6 feet from each family unit. Congregants are asked to remain in their seats until an usher prompts them to leave. Family groups will be encouraged to sit together and only one related family unit will be allowed per pew. Maximum seating capacity guidelines put forth by the state of MN will be followed.

Passing of the peace will only be done verbally at this time.

Communion will be offered only on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month and will be done with members remaining in their pews. Means of delivering communion packets to others who are distancing at home have been developed and request for at home communion should be forwarded to the church office. These home visits will be conducted outdoors or through an opening, communion delivery will not occur inside your residence. We will continue to utilize the prepackaged communion packs at this time during service and for home visits. These packets will be consecrated prior to service by pastor and distributed individually by the greeter with the weeks bulletin upon entry into the church sanctuary.

Masks for those members that forgot theirs for worship will be available in the narthex. Again, these will be required during service. If you borrow one of these loaner masks, we ask that upon leaving you place it in the designated bin so they may be washed and reused. Masks are not required for any members under 2 years of age.

## **Fellowship**

We will not be offering food and beverages during this time. Fellowship is only permitted outside the building at this time. The fellowship hall will be used for meetings only.

## **Cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation**

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, and areas in the building including restrooms, the fellowship hall, the sanctuary and the choir loft. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc. Disinfecting wipes will be provided in each restroom for members to wipe door handles after each use. Should a member become symptomatic during the service, additional cleaning of the area will need to be noted for the custodian by the ushers who escorted the member out of the area. Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant 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. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the building, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people. Due to the nature of the room only one family will be allowed to use the family room each Sunday. This will be done as first come, first served.

Ceiling fans should remain in use throughout the service.

Provided we have good weather and no bugs it is highly recommended to prop open the entry doors during service and open windows.

## **Communications and training**

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated via email and via July's *Parables* to all staff and church members. All necessary training will be provided to staff and volunteers. Additional communication and training will be ongoing should recommendations for COVID precautions change and provided to all staff and volunteers who did not receive the initial training. Staff, volunteers, and congregants will not be permitted to enter the church if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19. FRLC Council is to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by staff and the congregation. All staff, volunteers, and FRLC Council are to work through this new program together and update the training, as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by FRLC Council and was posted in the narthex on 6/18/2020. It will be updated, as necessary.

**Max capacities:**

Maximum socially distanced COVID capacities for areas of the building are as follows:

Fireside Room: 6 persons max

Sunday School Room: 4 persons max

Upstairs Youth Room: 8 persons max

Fellowship Hall: 24 persons max

Narthex area seating: 32 persons max

Sanctuary bump out seating: 18 persons max

Sanctuary pews: 56 persons max (based on average of 4 persons per pew); Max 1 family per pew

Choir loft pews: 8 persons max (based on average of 4 persons per pew); Max 1 family per pew

Seated separately: 1 organist, 1 minister, 1 worship assistant, 1 videographer

Total Capacity for service: 118 persons including those conducting the service

Total building capacity is to equal 50% or less of our stated fire code capacity. Documentation on our fire capacity from 2013 is stated as 260 persons, making our current capacity 130 persons. This is in accordance with the current orders of our governor and will change accordingly if those orders change.

These capacities must be maintained at all times.

These policies will be maintained until further guidance has been provided by the FRLC Council. FRLC Council will continue to follow the recommendations and requirements put forth by the MDH and CDC.

Certified by:



Ken Peterson  
FRLC President 2020

6/18/2020

2020 FRLC Council		
Wayne Dahlberg	Denise Carlson	Steve Baker
Joan Kuettel	Jim Dahlberg	Gary Baker
Clark Peterson	Michelle Libby	Rich Hoeg
Ken Peterson	Kathy Pierson	Sue Oberg