

Covid-19 Update: July 1, 2021

The Council is listening to all input from the congregation, Panhandle Health, and recent worship recommendations from the ELCA. With the knowledge that at least 80% of the congregation is vaccinated, Panhandle Health continues to see Bonner County as having a medium risk of an outbreak, the CDC continues to require Assisted Living Facilities to follow protocols in public areas (including health checks and signing in of all residents, staff, and visitors), and we have children & other adults unable to be vaccinated. Therefore, we are following these protocols for indoor, group gatherings:

- 6' spacing between family/ friend groups while seated or standing inside. (None of us likes the blue tape in the sanctuary, so if you have a better idea for insuring distancing between non-related groups, please share with Council. (Christ Our Redeemer has their chair rows spaced six feet apart. We do not have that option, unless we remove pews.)
- Masks are optional for vaccinated individuals; masks recommended for unvaccinated.
- Communion is being served with washed / sanitized hands and masks worn by pastors.
- Use Hand sanitizer or wash hands upon entry for all congregants.
- All fellowship is conducted outside.
- Please respect everyone's choices and desire to be healthy and to feel safe while worshipping together.
- With greater freedom, comes greater responsibility to caretake each other in the form that if you do not feel well or have symptoms of illness, we welcome you to worship with us online instead of in-person.
- We are singing a few verses of the hymns (the CDC names this as a high risk behavior in larger groups of people from differing households, who are not wearing masks). But, our worship is planned to be shorter than an hour and windows are opened for ventilation to mitigate the risk.
- Groups may request use of the fellowship hall, following these practices and are required to clean surfaces after use.

We recognize everyone has a choice in where they worship God and how. We also know that no matter what we put in place, some members and guests may not like or feel comfortable with all our practices. Throughout this journey and the many long discussions held by the FLC Council, the guiding force has been to be faithful to Jesus' command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbors as Christ loves us." We pray you will continue to walk this way with us as First Lutheran Church. And, if you cannot, we pray you are able to worship God wherever you are.