

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE

## Specific Guidelines for Indoor Worship During COVID-19 Pandemic Version 2.1

The well-being of each person remains our primary consideration. The following guidelines are an addendum to our normal building usage policy, and apply to all individuals or groups participating at indoor worship. These guidelines are subject to change at any time. *Your presence at worship implies gracious consent to the following:*

1. We are committed to safe worship practices for the whole Body of Christ as we reopen the church. Each of us shares the great responsibility to protect the more vulnerable among us who are still at risk from COVID-19. MASKING IS STILL HIGHLY ENCOURAGED for all participants, especially during singing. Effective *May 28\**, anyone who is FULLY VACCINATED, may participate in indoor worship without wearing a mask or physical distancing. Anyone NOT FULLY VACCINATED is highly encouraged to get vaccinated, wear a mask, and physically distance at indoor worship.
2. Streaming (live video/audio broadcasting through the internet) will continue each Sunday. Streaming gives worshipers a choice to participate in one's car in the parking lot, or to worship safely from home.
3. Worshipers must be free of COVID symptoms and any illness.
4. Unvaccinated children between the ages of 5-15 are ~~required~~ encouraged to wear a mask covering their mouth and nose at all times indoors.
5. Handling of objects, close greetings or handshakes with fellow members, and other similar contact is discouraged. The offering plate remains in an accessible location during the service. A secure drop box is located at the exterior of the building on the east side, and online giving is an option. Waving and other friendly no-contact greetings are absolutely encouraged.
6. Beginning June 6, 2021, Holy Communion returns to the communion rail, with one space of distance between households. In addition, Communion elements may be offered as a take-home option, and by appointment.
7. Separate Executive Orders govern indoor food service. Current MN Stay Safe Plan for Places of Worship states: *No food or drink except when essential to perform a ritual or service (e.g., Communion)*. OUR KITCHEN REMAINS CLOSED. Church rooms are available only to pre-approved meetings. A separate form is available in the church office. Though informal gatherings (coffee fellowship, soup suppers, snacks at meetings, funeral lunches and the like) are on hold for now, we look forward to the day when Christian hospitality resumes.
8. In the event of a known exposure to COVID-19, our church is required to follow Health Department guidelines, which may include closure, quarantines and further cancellation of activities. To ensure confidentiality, First Lutheran will not provide information beyond public notification of time and date of exposure, and we humbly ask for your prayers for any who are ill.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of First Lutheran Church, thank you for your compliance. Though we cannot guarantee safety, we are committed to best practices, state law, and synodical guidance, designed to minimize spread of illness and suffering. Galatians 6:9 strengthens us: *So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.* Above all, we are believers in Jesus, who has promised to be with our members—with *all* believers—wherever and however we gather in His name.

## First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie Specific Guidelines for Outdoor Worship during Covid-19 Pandemic    Version 2

*As an Addendum to current Indoor Worship Guidelines, the following are in effect:*

1. MASKING IS STILL HIGHLY ENCOURAGED FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.
2. Participants must be free of COVID symptoms and any illness.
3. When Holy Communion is celebrated as a group during outdoor worship, communion elements will also be offered as a take-home option for any who choose it.
4. No Food or Drinks will be served before, during, or after worship at this time. Gathering for coffee hour will continue to be suspended

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Version 1 approved May 4, 2021 & Version 2 updated May 18 by Executive Committee and endorsed by Church Council May 28, 2021

### Resources:

<https://mn.gov/covid19/stay-safe/stay-safe-plan/index.jsp>



*Exact language from*  
<https://staysafe.mn.gov/>  
*May 18, 2021*

*Will be regularly monitored by  
Executive Committee for  
changes and new guidance*

**Places of Worship,  
religious services,  
weddings, and funerals**

### **Beginning May 14, 2021**

Masks are no longer required. Unvaccinated people should still wear a face covering.

Open at 100% capacity. Group size increased to 10 or household.  
6 feet of social distance must be maintained between households.

No food or drink except when essential to perform a ritual or service (e.g., Communion), and singing is permitted as long as congregants remain masked.

### **Beginning May 27, 2021, at 11:59 p.m.**

Distancing requirements and group size limits are eliminated.