

COVID-19 Responsive Guidelines for returning to worship at Salem Lutheran Elizabethville:

Beginning Sunday, May 31st, Pentecost Sunday, we will once again allow worshippers to enter the church building for our regular 9:00 am Mass. Those planning to return to church must agree to follow these guidelines for the protection of the most vulnerable among us. Yes, many of us may be symptom free, and healthy, but the possibility of spreading any illness to someone with a vulnerable immune system is always a concern.

Therefore, because we care about being a healthy and vibrant congregation:

1. If you are feeling ill in any way (cough, fever, aches, etc.) **STAY HOME!** This cannot be overstated. Entering a space with others while feeling ill is not good at any time, but rather reckless and inconsiderate during this pandemic response.
2. If you have been ill or have a compromised immune system due to any other illness, chronic or acute, **STAY HOME!** Until you can be assured that your own immune system is healthy enough to be out, don't take this unnecessary risk.
3. If you are uneasy about gatherings, or just not sure about your own risk level, **STAY HOME!** Please stay on the side of caution if you have any doubt about your own wellness.

If you require individual communion please speak with one of the ministerial staff and that can be arranged so that you can stay safely at home.

If you have passed the vital questions above, and have decided to return to church, the following guidelines will be enforced while in the building:

1. **Masks** will be worn at all times when in the building, especially while singing or talking with others. You are responsible for bringing your own mask, no masks will be available at the church.
2. **Temperature checks** will be available at the entrances to ensure safety.
3. **ENTER ONLY** through the front doors or the ramp door. Access through the sacristy is not allowed as that small space does not allow for distancing.
4. **6ft social distancing** is essential, this means every-other pew will be kept empty. Stagger your seat choices and keep a personal space for you, while respecting the personal space of others.
5. **Tithes and Offerings** will be received in the boxes located in each narthex. There will be no plate passed during the Mass. This serves a two-fold purpose: first there is less person to person contact, and secondly, those who may not be able to fulfill their desire to give due to any financial hardship will not have to decline the offering plate or feel uneasy about giving. We understand the hardship some parishioners may be experiencing, and we do not want anyone to feel like they are in an awkward position.
6. **Passing of the Peace** will be suspended, and no physical contact allowed. Simply waving at those around you will allow for the acknowledgement of our community gathering. Do not leave your pew.

7. The eucharist will continue to be served under one kind (bread) so that the risk of cups being touched is minimized. We will revisit this weekly and return to both kinds when able. This has always been a theologically appropriate way of communing when faced with hardship. For example, those who cannot have alcohol receive the fullness of the sacrament in the bread alone, as those who cannot have wheat receive the fullness of the sacrament in the wine alone.
8. When receiving the host please raise your open palm to the minister so that he can simply place a host on your hand. Do not attempt to take the host in your fingers from the minister's hand.
9. The font will be empty so that repeated touching of the water by many can be avoided.
10. Hand sanitizer should be used when entering the building, and anytime you've touched your face, used a tissue, or touched items which may not be clean.
11. Hymnals will not be used at all. Everything needed for worship will be printed in your bulletin, which you should take with you when you leave.
12. Doors and windows will be open to allow a greater airflow within the church building. If you do not like a draft, sit somewhere near the middle of the church. Do Not attempt to close a window, door, or turn off a fan. It is essential to keep airflow in the building to aid in a clean environment. This means if you tend to be cool, wear something to keep warmer. It is always easier to add a layer for your personal comfort than to compromise the airflow and safety of the congregation.

Finally, if you have any specific concerns please contact the ministerial staff immediately. Pastor Nathan, Deacon Ken, and Parish Nurse Sharyn are ready and willing to discuss these things to ensure everyone's safety and health.

WELCOME HOME people of Christ Jesus!