

Stage 3 Reopening Guidelines
Lutheran Church of the Newtons (LCN) Size-limited Indoor Worship Services

September 13, 2020

Key Criteria

- COVID-19 cases are near-zero, rapid testing and contact tracing is widespread, and health care systems are well-equipped
- Follow all LCN Stage 1 and 2 Guidelines as well as those in this Stage 3 document.
- Observe all MA directives: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-places-of-worship>
- Ensure that adequate safety measures are followed at all times (hygiene, physical distance, masks)
- Undertake detailed planning and preparation
- Continue online Worship Service so higher-risk persons can be involved without endangering themselves or others

Our Pastor, Music Director, & Worship Committee, in consultation with the Reopening Task Force, will create a detailed plan for holding size-limited indoor services.

Sanctuary Preparation

1. Remove and store hymnals, books, Bibles, wall hangings, & all other items not used in a service.
2. Set up a projection screen for the worship liturgy or use one-time use bulletins.
3. Create a plan for distanced seating. Place visual markings on pews/seating to delineate proper separations. Prepare a variety of seating sizes to accommodate individuals and families.
4. Create and post the following signage.
 - a. The single entrance and exit
 - b. The flow of traffic markers to enter, move about, and depart buildings in ways that minimize risk
 - c. Bathroom use instructions
 - d. Non-contact greetings examples
 - e. Offering basket locations
 - f. A list of safety measures, e.g., six-foot physical distancing, masks, hygiene
5. If it is known that an individual with COVID-19 attended a service or otherwise entered church building, deep clean and disinfect the area consistent with CDC guidance.

Safety Preparation

1. Continue to arrange online sign-up for services and events in advance in order to monitor and limit the number of attendees in accordance with MA size of gathering directives.
2. Prepare and retain seating maps of services to facilitate possible contact tracing of infection.
3. Prepare one bathroom for use by installing signage and disinfection supplies for cleaning after each use.
4. Recruit and train ushers to warmly greet and guide attendees through this new form of worship.
5. If it is known that an individual with COVID-19 attended a service or otherwise entered church building, LCN will notify the local Board of Public Health and assist with contact trace and advising contacts to self-quarantine.

Worship Service Preparation

1. Ensure sanctuary is well-ventilated by open windows for air exchange.
2. Trained ushers will warmly greet and guide people through this new form of worship.
 - a. Direct people to check-in table where their temperatures will be taken and they can cleanse their hands with sanitizer before being seated.
 - b. Guide attendees to observe the one-way flow of traffic to enter, be present in, and depart the building.
 - c. Handout any print material needed for the service.
 - d. Assist attendees to their assigned seats.
 - e. Point out baskets in which offering may be deposited.
 - f. Monitor bathroom use including a 5-minute interval between people.
 - g. Monitor that masks are worn properly and cover the mouth and nose while entering, inside, and exiting the building.
3. Pastor may remove her face covering while conducting the service or making an address provided that she is able to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
4. Musicians who wear masks are permitted provided they maintain 6 feet distance.
5. One singer is permitted provided they maintain a distance of about 20 feet from the congregation and other worship service participants.
6. No congregational singing is allowed at in-person indoor worship services.
7. Communion may be held with bread only.
8. The Peace is to be exchanged without physical touch (a reverent bow or wave, or a greeting with words) and at safe distance.
9. Offering is to be collected by having offering baskets placed in convenient locations rather than passing them among the congregation. Online giving is also encouraged.
10. In-person Sunday School for children is not permitted; most children's and youth ministries are conducted online.
11. No communal gatherings pre- or post-service are permitted such as coffee hour that would extend our time together.
12. After each service, leaders will seek feedback from those who attended the event. This information will be used by leaders to evaluate the successes and challenges for future events.
13. Additional ministry and services
 - a. In-person pastoral care visits may resume, provided hospital and care facility protocols are observed and strict hygiene protocols are maintained, and subject to consideration of any risk factors affecting the congregant or the visitor.
 - b. Weddings, funerals, and baptisms may be held, observing directives about the size of gatherings and all preparation and safety protocols listed above.