

Frequently Asked Questions: Relaunching In-House Worship

1. I am in the increased risk for severe illness group, should I come to in person worship?

According to our local authorities and LCMS District guidelines, at-risk individuals are strongly encouraged to worship at home. We will continue to offer online worship for our congregation because we affirm that the digital Word of God is valid and beneficial for faith development. In addition to this, Concordia has designated the Saturday evening service to ONLY be for those in the at-risk group who have been strictly following CDC guidelines and who feel comfortable attending. Please know that Concordia affirms your decision to either worship online or during the Saturday evening service.

2. Can you remind me again, who is considered at-risk or at higher risk for severe illness?

According to the CDC, based on currently available information and clinical expertise, the following conditions are considered at increased risk for severe illness or need extra precautions:

- As you get older, your risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases. For example, people in their 50s are at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 40s. Similarly, people in their 60s or 70s are, in general, at higher risk for severe illness than people in their 50s. The greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 is among those aged 85 or older.
- People of any age who have underlying conditions, such as diabetes, chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, heart conditions, immunocompromised, severe obesity, chronic kidney disease, and liver disease. Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns or questions about your underlying medical conditions. For more information from the CDC, click the link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higherrisk.html>

3. Will there be Holy Communion during the worship service?

Not initially because we want to ensure the safety and flow of worship. We will continue to look for ways to incorporate this into the future after we worship together in person. Because we are encouraging those at increased risk population to worship at home, offering Holy Communion in a small family setting outside of worship enables them to experience the Sacrament as well. Holy Communion is available on Tuesdays from 1:00-3:00pm and Thursdays from 6:00-8:00pm. No preregistration needed.

4. Why do I have to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer?

We require all people 3 years and older to wear a mask in our building. Our St. Louis County guidelines request this. Our LCMS District guidelines do as well. There is much we do not know about the virus but there are 4 things that have been shown to limit spread -**washing your hands frequently, wearing a mask, maintaining proper social distancing of at least 6 feet apart, and limiting the amount of time you are exposed.** We are committed to doing these four things to help keep people safe. Please follow the link below for further information on masks from the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-facecoverings.html>

5. Am I able to fellowship in the building after the service?

Because of the limited number of people allowed in the building we will not be having fellowship time between services. The amount of people in the building during and after services is too high for everyone to be able to maintain proper social distancing of six feet apart. We will also need to usher people from the church outside in order to clean and prepare for the safety of the next group. If you would like to say hi, please do so after you have completely exited the building so that we are able to stay safe and allow others to come to church after you.

6. What if I want to worship at church but the service I want is full?

All three services are identical, apart from the 5pm service continuing to be reserved for those in the increased risk for severe illness group. Services in the Sanctuary will only be able to hold 45 families and the Concordia Center 56 families. The online registration form will let you know when the space has reached its limit. Recorded worship will continue to be available and accessible through the website, Facebook, Youtube, Vimeo and email.

7. Will online worship be the same after in person worship starts?

Both formats of worship will essentially be the same experience you have today until we transition to livestream (see next question). The only exception may be the music which will most likely be prerecorded earlier in the week by a band, organist, and/or pianist in the Concordia Center.

8. What is livestream and when will that start?

Sometime this fall we will transition from our prerecorded worship to “livestream”. This means, we will be recording live the 10:00 worship. Those outside our building will be invited to watch live at 10:00 or watch the recorded service afterward. This is more than a financial expense and will take time to set up, train and deploy. There are many ways to livestream – some are very high quality and others simpler. We are committed to a quality, warm, worshipful livestream experience. **More details in the coming weeks.**

9. Besides what was said in the video, are there other precautions being taken for the health and safety of our members?

We will not include those items in the service which require passing of physical items including the offerings basket, sharing of the peace, shaking of hands, distributing bulletins, etc. If you would like to know more about the CDC’s recommendations on precautions in a church setting, please click the link below: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html>

10. If I show up without registering, can I worship?

We require all people to register prior to worship. Making sure we have an orderly entrance and exit and controlling the capacity is critical. To promote safety and prevent disorganization prior to worship, we do require preregistration. Registration will be open every Tuesday in The Front Page, on the website and on Friday via email.

11. Will I be able to sing?

Research has shown that singing, yelling, and exercise are all activities that increase the amount of potentially dangerous aerosols in the air which can linger for several hours. Masks are required in the building, but even with masks, a room of singing people poses risks. While it’s impossible to control what people do, members will be encouraged to listen, hum along, or singing very softly behind their masks. Until more is understood about the virus and its transmission, we need err on the side of caution.

12. Will I be able to use either the bathroom or water fountain?

We strongly discourage people leaving their pews once the service starts but we do understand that there may be a need. Bathrooms will be open, but we encourage people to use the restroom at home prior to arrival. Drinking fountains will be closed for safety. We encourage you to bring a water bottle if you have a need.