

Covid-19/Re-Opening Committee 4/28/21

Attended by Ashley Cochran, Pauline Klatt and Helen Clemas

Below are the recommendations from our committee for safety procedures for CLC regarding Covid-19. We acknowledge that we are opening up the church beyond current safety recommendations, we want to honor all congregants and hope that families and individuals will make their own decisions on what they are comfortable with.

Specific questions to be addressed from council and meeting with Pastor Sandy and worship leaders on 4/27/21:

1. What are our recommendations for holding worship outside in regards to group numbers, spacing, and mask wearing?
 - a. No limitations on the number of people.
 - *If 250+ are expected for an event we need to contact St. Croix County Health which is referenced in our sources below.
 - b. 6 feet apart for family units.
 - c. Masks will be required in our outdoor gatherings as we are not going to ask for proof of vaccinations. (See #3)
2. What are our recommendations for inside gathering in regards to group numbers, spacing, and mask wearing?
 - a. The church will be open to 25 family units. This means that 25 households, no matter the amount of family members, will be allowed inside.
 - b. 6 feet apart for family units.
 - c. Masks will be required in our outdoor gatherings as we are not going to ask for proof of vaccinations. (See #3)
3. Will we require proof of vaccination in order to remove masks, or other future changes, as CDC guidelines are changing for vaccinated individuals?
 - a. No we will not be checking vaccinations and instead will continue to ask for mask wearing and social distancing.
4. Bible Study would like to remove their masks but social distance while meeting. They have asked for our guidance.
 - a. Groups can decide if they want to remove their masks and their social distancing guidelines.
 - i. We ask that this is done in a way to be receptive and kind to all members of the group if they decide to proceed with a request to remove masks or be together closer than 6 feet apart.
 - b. Groups are reminded that they are responsible to disinfect all surfaces after their gathering.
5. Worship has asked what our recommendations are on food. We are planning to resume church in the fall and would like to serve a meal. We did not have a reception or a cake for confirmation/first communion/pastor. They would like some guidelines on what or when serving food would be allowed.
 - a. Buffet style food serving is not recommended by this committee at this time.
 - b. Large food gatherings inside the church are not currently recommended by this committee at this time. (A mostly full fellowship hall was what we envisioned and are discouraging.)
 - c. Takeout style food servings are acceptable.
6. Council would like us to lay out a gradual guideline to understand when more restrictions will be lifted.
 - a. We feel we've lifted the restrictions to an acceptable level.

- b. We will address the food decisions once numbers start falling or when fall planning begins, whichever comes first.
- c. Council is welcome to ask us to gather again if they have specific questions or concerns.

Key information pulled from various sources which are linked below.

Wisconsin Council of Churches recommendation for re-opening:

To resume ministry in physical spaces in a safer way, we can add several mitigations. Most critically: we recommend making face masks mandatory, and having someone who is not the pastor responsible for ensuring people adhere to this. Communicate clearly to the congregation to stay home if they feel at all “off,” if they know they have been exposed, or if they are waiting for COVID test results. Use less than the full capacity of your space and increase physical distance between household groups (6-10 feet is recommended). Don’t assume that you have distancing covered by blocking off pews. You will need to think about ways to hold distancing outside the sanctuary – outside the door, in entryways, by coat racks, near and in restrooms. Make sure you have a sign-in so you can track attendance in case there is a need to trace contacts. We know that viral spread is affected by the amount of time we are together in an enclosed space. Shorten the length of events to 30 minutes or less if possible. Consider meeting outdoors; or if you cannot, increase the air exchange in your building with open windows and doors, or modifications to your HVAC system (fans are not recommended). Create a low-touch environment by pre-positioning bulletins or communion elements, emptying fonts, modifying the passing of the peace, and eliminating greeting lines. If sung music is essential, have it offered by worship leaders only (masked if possible, and well-distanced from others).

St. Croix County Covid-19 Dashboard as of 4/26/21:

- Our Health Advisory is “Very High”
- 84% of 65+ have received one dose of vaccine
- 38% of total residents have received one dose of vaccine

St. Croix County Health Advisory as of 4/7/21:

Mask Advisory-St. Croix County Public Health recommends masks continue to be worn in public, indoor, and private places. This advisory shall be in place until June 6, 2021, upon which time it will be reviewed by the Health Officer to determine if it should be continued, modified, or discontinued.

Gatherings (Number of Individuals)

Location	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Indoor	10	25	75	No limit. Masks and distance required.
Outdoor	25	50	100	No limit. Distance required, mask if distancing cannot be maintained.

Other Businesses and Organizations (% Capacity)

Location	Very High	High	Medium	Low
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Indoor	25%	50%	100%	100%
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Distancing to be maintained, Masking should be required.

Large Gatherings (>250 Guests)

Location	Very High	High	Medium	Low
*Indoor	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended
**Outdoor	Not recommended	Not recommended	No eating or drinking. Masks required and distancing to be enabled by event design	Designated area for eating and drinking. Masks required unless seated and actively eating or drinking.

**Indoor large gatherings of 250 or more people are not recommended at any level until disease activity is consistently low and vaccination levels acceptable.*

***Organizers of large outdoor are to contact St. Croix county at least one month in advance to review and discuss a disease mitigation plan and safety measures.*

CDC's Communities of Faith:

Scaling Up Operations

- Establish and maintain communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in your community.
- Provide protections for staff and congregants at [higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19. Offer options for staff at [higher risk for severe illness](#) (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. Offer options for congregants at [higher risk of severe illness](#) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., remote participation in services).
- Consistent with applicable federal and State laws and regulations, put in place policies that protect the privacy and confidentiality of people at [higher risk for severe illness](#) regarding underlying medical conditions.
- Encourage any organizations that share or use the facilities to also follow these considerations as applicable.
- If your community provides social services in the facility as part of its mission, consult CDC's information for [schools](#) and [businesses and workplaces](#), as relevant, for helpful information.

CDC's After You're Fully Vaccinated

If you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people of any age from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks or staying 6 feet apart, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- You can gather or conduct activities outdoors without wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.

- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.

Resources used and discussed to come to these guidelines:

- Wisconsin Council of Churches
<https://www.wichurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Holding-Our-Plans-Loosely-Returning-to-Church-2-3.pdf>
- St. Croix County Covid-19 Dashboard
<https://infogram.com/st-croix-county-covid-19-dashboard-1h9j6qggxzn754g?live>
- St. Croix County's Health Advisory
<https://www.sccwi.gov/951/Health-Advisory>
- CDC's Community of Faith
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>
- CDC's After You're Fully Vaccinated
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>