

Coronavirus/COVID 19 Guidelines

Throughout history, humanity has been subject to numerous outbreaks of plagues, epidemics, and illnesses; each time the Church has held firm to confess the reality of Christ's presence in the lives of those who are sick and suffering. As we have seen the outbreaks of the Coronavirus around the world and are now being told that it is not a question of "if" there is an outbreak in the US, but "when," these guidelines have been developed to help outline the reaction of our congregation in the midst of this threat. While we will not fear death because we know that our God has promised us life, we will also not tempt God through foolish actions, therefore, Faith Lutheran Church will follow the guidelines and best practices put forth by the CDC and the local health department to assist in preventing the spread of contagious diseases. The following guidelines have been developed to guide and describe the types of actions we will follow and consider as the understanding and spread of this illness continues to develop.

First Steps (Good practice for preventing the spread of any illness):

- All members are encouraged to wash hands frequently before and while attending service
- If you are sick/contagious, please be courteous of your neighbor and avoid contact that might spread illness to them.
- If you are unable to attend services, remember that you are able to watch via our livestream at flcgb.com
- Avoid touching eyes, mouth, and nose without washing your hands before and after contact.
- If they are sick/contagious, Pastor and Vicar avoid making shut-in calls unless it is an emergency and the family is notified of the illness in advance.

Increased Concern or Awareness (Localized cases have been confirmed and the CDC or local health department begins to issue warnings and guidelines):

- If schools and other education centers are ordered to close, we will also suspend educational activities.
- Fellowship activities will be cancelled.
- Staff members who are feeling ill will be encouraged to work from home, if possible.
- If a non-called staff member is quarantined, they will continue to receive pay in order to support them and their family during their time of need.
- Door handles and other surfaces will be wiped down between services.
- Full services will be printed in the bulletin and enough bulletins will be printed that they will not be recycled from service to service.
- Individual cups will be spread out in the distribution trays to minimize contact with other cups. The elders (who have washed their hands prior to distribution) will refill trays as necessary.
- The offering will no longer be taken via the passing of the plate, it will be collected after service.

Highest Level of Precaution (An outbreak has been confirmed and there are large segments of the community sick or under quarantine):

- Recommendations of health officials will be followed that do not come into conflict with our public confession of faith.
- Services will still be held with livestream being utilized for those unable to attend.
- Pastor will make reasonable attempts to visit those whose life is in danger due to the illness while taking precautions to balance pastoral care and protecting others from illness.
- Funerals will still be held for those who are members, but no meals will be provided at the conclusion of the service.
- All non-worship service activities of the church will be cancelled, but we will strive for the service schedule to continue uninterrupted.

Regarding Communion: Every year during cold and flu season, questions are asked about the spread of illness through the distribution of communion. Those engaged in distribution either wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to distribution. The practice of communion distribution has been studied and the CDC reports that there has never been a reported case of an outbreak of illness due to the distribution of communion. Furthermore, the use of the common cup and that those who receive communion from the common cup, even daily, show no greater incidence of illness than those who do not. In fact, because of how communion is distributed from the common cup, the risk of illness is so low, it is listed as almost undetectable (it cannot be identified as zero risk because there is still a theoretical chance of infection). For the sake of your neighbor, if you are ill, it is advisable to not receive from the common cup so as to not burden their minds with concerns over what might be ailing you.