

CoVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan
for
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Saint Paul, MN
Version I
As of May 26, 2020
Updated August 5, 2020
Updated January 25, 2021
Updated March 25, 2021

This plan was developed to support implementation of public health activities required to minimize the spread of CoVID-19 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Gloria Dei) and was informed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance.

**Developed by: Gloria Dei CoVID-19 Safety Task Force, Chair: Cathy Sedacca,
Congregation Council President**

Gloria Dei Plan

Gloria Dei is committed to providing a safe and healthy facility for our staff, members and visitors. This plan was developed in response to the CoVID-19 pandemic to ensure we implement strategies and procedures to preserve public health. It is expected that the entire church will have a role in implementing this plan to mitigate transmission of CoVID-19 within our facility and our community that would result in a disruption to our mission. Therefore, all persons in our facility will be expected to comply with all aspects of this plan. The church leadership and council have full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

This plan has been developed by the church staff and Gloria Dei's CoVID-19 Safety Task Force. Guidance and recommendations from the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate including:

- Personal hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting.
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons.
- Controls for social distancing.
- Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfecting and decontaminating.
- Communications and training that will be provided to persons onsite.
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

This preparedness and response plan assume the following:

1. Gloria Dei will consider guidance from the Minnesota governor and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).
2. Gloria Dei personnel will fall into different disease risk categories and decisions for return to the facility will be made in accordance with medical and public health guidance for risk stratification (e.g. age, health status). Information to help determine job risks are available on the OSHA and NIOSH website, and each individual should confer with their primary health care provider regarding their own personal health risks from CoVID-19. Gloria Dei's role is not to determine the risk level of individuals; rather the church leadership should ensure that individuals can make their own informed choices and be supported.
3. Resumption of activities by Gloria Dei personnel will occur in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The CoVID-19 situation will evolve, and Gloria Dei will remain adaptable and nimble to the dynamic environment. The baseline level of risk for those working and using our facility will change as restaurants and retail businesses reopen, schools reopen, etc., requiring a reassessment of what level of resumption and precautions are appropriate.
5. To minimize large gatherings at Gloria Dei, those functions that can practically stay at home to complete work will do so until Gloria Dei is fully opened.

6. Social distancing (maintaining a distance of 6-12 feet between individuals), wearing of masks or other appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), handwashing and disinfection of surfaces are key factors to reducing the transmission of the CoVID-19 virus.
7. Worship services and other large gatherings will be carried out online.
8. Personal responsibility and self-screening for you and members in your household are the keys to safe operations and the avoidance of disease transmission. Educational materials will be developed for staff, members and visitors to the Gloria Dei facility. As a condition of meeting onsite, both internal and external groups are expected to follow posted instructions.

CoVID-19 Plan Management

The staff, Church Council, and CoVID-19 Safety Task Force are responsible for CoVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan. Infection control and occupational safety and health plans will apply to anyone working in or visiting the church (e.g., all staff, members and visitors).

- The church has reached out to state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals and established ongoing communications to make sure they are getting relevant and up-to-date information concerning CoVID-19.
 Date contacted: May 21, 2020, by Jill Stewart, RN PHN, COHN, Gloria Dei Parish Nurse
 Update: Jan. 25, 2021, Jill Stewart, RN PHN, COHN, Gloria Dei Parish Nurse, regularly checks with state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals
 State and/or local public health official: Minnesota Department of Public Health
 Contact information: CoVID-19 State Hotline 651-201-3920.
- The church coordinator(s) and staff leadership are aware of and will follow all applicable regulations and public health agency guidelines.
 - CDC/National Occupational Health and Safety Administration Coronavirus Disease 2019, available online at www.CDC.gov and at www.CDC.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html
 - Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for CoVID-19, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, online at www.OSHA.gov
 - Minnesota Department of Public Health Guidance for Faith-Based Communities, available online at www.health.state.mn.us
 - Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Guidance on CoVID-19, available online at www.ramseycounty.us.
- Reopening: Guidance for Worship Services and Religious Gatherings and Guidance for General Office Guidelines, American Industrial Hygiene Association, available online at www.AIHA.org.
- Facility assessments to identify CoVID-19 risks and prevention strategies should be done periodically as part of sound occupational health and public health practice. This plan will be reviewed frequently to ensure effectiveness.

Facility Public Health Measures

Infection prevention measures are being implemented at our facility in accordance with public health guidance and best practices.

Handwashing

Anyone in the Gloria Dei facility is instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time onsite, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. Hand-sanitizer dispensers at designated entrances to the building, sanctuary, meeting areas, and office (with sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol), can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

- A “Clean Your Hands!” poster will be in all restrooms providing proper hand washing methods.
- In occupied areas, custodial staff are checking and replenishing soap dispensers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer stations regularly.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Everyone is asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face—in particular mouth, nose, and eyes—with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of in the trash and individuals should wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette reminders appear on posters, and tissues and trash receptacles are readily available.

- The CDC “Stop the Spread of Germs” poster has been posted in all building lobbies and other common areas.
- Tissues will be available in common areas.
- Employees are expected to wear an alternative mask (cloth bandana, cloth mask or commercial surgical type mask) in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Individuals may bring their own mask, or Gloria Dei may order them staff.
- Wearing an alternative mask is an effective measure for source control and helps reduce the risk of the person wearing the face covering from unintentionally transmitting the virus to others. If staff eat in a shared space, they need to maintain physical distance of greater than six feet.

Social distancing

Everyone entering the facility is asked to practice social distancing on public health guidance and best practices. These measures may be adjusted according to phases of this preparedness and

response plan. [Social distancing](#) is the practice of increasing the space between individuals and decreasing the frequency of contact to reduce the risk of spreading the disease, ideally to maintain six feet between all individuals, even those who are asymptomatic.

Remote Work and Adjusted Onsite Hours

Gloria Dei implemented the following procedures and practices for remote work and adjusted hours. All staff will meet with their supervisors to determine an individual plan for work location based on responsibilities and risk levels. If health needs or pandemic circumstances change, individual work plans will be adjusted.

- Telework is approved and expected for all persons who can accomplish their primary duty functions from home.
- Staff are provided guidance and training to work remotely.
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks.
- Flexible hours and staggered shifts are available to minimize the number of persons in the facility at one time.

Onsite Work

Staff, members and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas where six feet of separation cannot be maintained. Staff, members, and visitors must wear masks at all times. Masks may be removed when staff are in their personal offices and where six feet of separation is feasible.

- Shared staff offices are assessed and, where feasible, staff are reassigned to other working areas or alternate hours to maintain social distancing. As much as possible, staff are assigned to work areas that are not shared.
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, i.e., copier room, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed of in the trash after use and hands washed or sanitized promptly after using wipes.
- Staff will avoid using anyone else's PPE, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices or other personal work tools and equipment. Staff will not use mailboxes and Office Coordinator will slide mail under office doors, for example, for the appropriate staff members.
- Common spaces such as break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms are rearranged to promote social distancing. Staff who can work in offices will close doors and may open windows to reduce potential exposure to others. Waiting area chairs have been moved. A table may be placed in front of reception area to maintain appropriate physical distance. Signs will be placed to direct where items can be left.

- Gloria Dei staff will work onsite only when necessary and will schedule time in the building to limit the number of people in the building/space at the same time. Staff will avoid gathering in the building at the same time, and the same teams will work the same schedule, to limit potential exposures. Schedule changes will be discussed at staff meetings whenever possible. Staff who may be ill, or who have ill household member(s), will not report to the building.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by Gloria Dei staff in accordance with CDC guidance. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g., break rooms) and high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, railings).

- All custodial staff and their supervisors will be provided refresher training on proper cleaning techniques, as well as background information on CoVID-19.
- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements. Lists of effective products are available online. The least hazardous effective products will be used. Instructions for use, including PPE, will be followed.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to the Gloria Dei, the Custodial Supervisor will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space. If the space has a door, such as an office, it will be closed and the space left undisturbed for at least three days before cleaning to reduce potential exposure to maintenance staff.
- Building staff will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, door handles, handrails and elevator buttons regularly, and especially after use.

Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies

Gloria Dei will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms. All CoVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff.

Gloria Dei has leave policies that encourage staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies are delineated in the Employee Handbook.

Questions on leave policies should be directed to Gloria Dei's Director of Finance and Administration Beverly Sargent.

Employee Self-Screening

Staff members should conduct self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of CoVID-19. Symptoms of the virus often include, but are not limited to, fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees), cough, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat and shortness of breath. Information on CoVID-19 signs and symptoms are available at the [CDC website](#). A Visitor and Employee self-screening checklist is available at the check in table in the building, and also on the [MDH website](#).

Staff must report symptoms (fever, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, new headache, new loss of smell or taste) to their supervisors or to the pastor on call. Employees exhibiting symptoms should not come into the church.

- Report any exposure to CoVID-19 positive individuals, respiratory symptoms, sore throat or dry cough to your supervisor.
- If the employee indicates any of these conditions, the supervisor may require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

If an employee begins to exhibit symptoms at work, they should isolate themselves immediately, contact their supervisor by phone or email, leave the building as soon as possible while wearing a mask and contact their health provider for advice. If the person has an office with a door, the door should be closed, and a sign posted to notify others to stay out.

Exposure to/and Confirmed Cases

If a CoVID-19 case is confirmed in any individual or in a member of their household, the individual will be asked to follow CDC guidelines prior to returning to the building.

Anyone exposed to another person in the building with a confirmed case should self-quarantine for 14 days following CDC guidelines.

Gloria Dei will work with the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Department and MDH to inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with CoVID-19 in our facility, and the health department will provide instructions regarding staff self-quarantine measures.

Consistent with compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), staff members' health status and health information will be protected.

Communications and Training

This preparedness and response plan are communicated to staff, congregation and anyone who has access to the building. Training is available to staff and persons using the facility

- Return to Work Training (meetings, videos, handouts, CDC and OSHA videos)
 - Topics should include but are not limited to: PPE, disinfection measures, social distancing protocol, CoVID-19 signs and symptoms information, return-to-work policies, self-monitoring practices, signage, time-off options and all other CoVID-19-related safe workplace changes.
- Enhanced Cleaning [AIHA list].
- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church visitor requirements handout.
- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church facility use handout.
- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church maintenance staff training: TBD.

Facility Use

Gloria Dei serves as a gathering place for congregation and community members. Gathering purposes in the congregation include congregational mission, support to social justice missions, celebration events and social engagements. Use of the facility will be based on the phases of this plan and align with state guidance and policies. Priority will be given to mission-related activities.

Any group that would like to use the facility while this plan is operational must request use using the Request for Facility Use form (Appendix A). Each request will be reviewed by staff or the CoVID-19 Safety Task Force. Church Council approval may be required in extraordinary situations.

If approved, each group utilizing the facility will be required to:

- Review training provided by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
- Share Gloria Dei Lutheran Church facility rules with participants
 - Conduct appropriate social distancing.
 - Wear masks.
 - Wash hands.
 - Cover your cough.
 - Do not use the premises if you/household contact are quarantined or ill.
 - Or other evidence based best practices and recommendations.
- Take attendance to include name and contact information.

No member of the congregation or community may use the facility until they have received approval from the office staff. The Church Council or the Gloria Dei CoVID-19 Safety Task Force will have final decision about facility use based on safety considerations and church mission requirements.

The task force may grant an exception to this policy, if needed.

Resources

Appendix B provides a list of resources to support the church's decisions and activities during the CoVID-19 pandemic.

Gloria Dei Reopening Phases

The purpose of this phased approach is to provide guidance and direction for restarting activities at the church. **The disease progression is imperfectly known and there may be times where Gloria Dei may need to move back and forth between phases.**

External Conditions	Church Activities
Phase 0: Preparation	
<p>External Conditions: Cases presenting in the state with limited community spread and testing is limited.</p> <p>Criteria (for phase): Government and organization leaders are initiating plans for social distancing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess risk to staff and congregation. ● Meet with church council to determine facility sheltering plan. ● Cancel or postpone facility onsite activities. ● Plan for social distancing activities. ● Meet with staff and initiate plan for hibernation activities.
Phase 1: Sheltering in Place	
<p>External Conditions: Government Orders for communities to stay at home. Disease spread is occurring the in the community and hospitalization are increasing. Testing is limited and there are widespread PPE shortages.</p> <p>Criteria (for phase): Government issues to stay at home orders.</p>	<p>Church Activities</p> <p>Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worship services move to online delivery. ● Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least six feet of space between people. ● Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptisms; events that take place in the sanctuary.) are postponed and all participants notified. <p>Activities onsite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All Gloria Dei staff will telework. ● Staff may return to the facility to acquire equipment and record worship segments. ● Bible studies and small groups will meet online.

Phase 2: Limited Building Use (Beginning June 1, 2020; ending no earlier than July 4, 2021)

External Conditions:

There are declining case counts and availability of testing is increasing. Contact tracing is in place and PPE is available for social distancing purposes (e.g. cloth masks).

Criteria (for phase):

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to the facility.

Church Activities

Worship

- Worship is held online.
- Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at six feet of space between people.
- Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptisms; events that take place in the sanctuary) should be kept to fewer than 100 (with staff) in attendance per state guidelines, and be able to maintain social distancing. Approval is required.

Activities onsite

- Bible studies and small groups continue to meet online.
- Office functions are limited to ensure essential operations.
- Church Council and leadership teams may consider meeting in spaces where maintaining safe distance is possible, using room number recommendations proposed by COVID Task Force, and wearing masks; or continue meeting online.
- Facility users/renters (events that take place in spaces other than the sanctuary) may be allowed to use with approval and based on size and mission. Social distancing and public health measures will be enforced.

Phase 3: Increased Building Use (Evaluation ongoing)

External Conditions:

Government leaders continue relaxation of social distancing measures. Cases of CoVID-19 continue to decrease, and testing is available. PPE is widely available.

Criteria (for phase):

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to campus.

Church has the ability to gradually expand number of people in the church while maintaining social distancing.

Church Activities

- To be determined at a later date

Phase 4: Full Operations with No or Minimal CoVID-19 Restrictions

External Conditions:

There are no or minimal state restrictions. Vaccine available. Widespread testing and identification of new CoVID-19 cases, with quarantining is occurring.

Criteria (for phase):

No or minimal state restrictions.

Church Activities

- To be determined

Gloria Dei Reopening Activities Chart

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Worship Services	Online	Online	Online	TBD	TBD
Students	Online	Online	Online	TBD	TBD
Ministry Events	Online	Online	Online	TBD	TBD
Office Staff	Remote	Remote	Remote/Onsite with social distancing	TBD	TBD
Community Groups	Online/Postponed	Online/Postponed	In person with permission	TBD	TBD
Life Celebrations	Postponed	Postponed	No more than 100 people; masks and social distancing required	TBD	TBD

Appendix A – Request for Facility Use
Request for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church Use

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Gloria Dei) priority continues to be the health and safety of all members of our community. However, we also recognize that our facility supports the missions of our congregation and our community. Consistent with Minnesota orders and public health advice, this form will enable church leadership to identify who might be permitted back to use the facility, starting first with groups who support essential church and social justice missions for our congregation and community.

For everyone’s safety, the church’s intent is to slowly and gradually invite groups back. Decisions for facility use will be based on phases of the Gloria Dei preparedness and response plan. To facilitate approval for use of our Gloria Dei facility, please complete the following form.

Name:

Group Size:

Will this gathering be repeated (e.g. weekly)? If yes, describe frequency.

Date for gathering(s):

Time in the building:

Time leaving the building:

Provide a brief summary of the gathering and why it must be done onsite or at another location away from your home.

Gloria Dei will provide guidance for use of the facility. Describe the precautions you will take to ensure your health and safety and the health and safety of those who will participate in the gathering (methods and means for social distancing, PPE, etc.).

Appendix B - Guidance for developing a CoVID-19 Preparedness Plan

General

CDC Coronavirus (CoVID-19): www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

Businesses

CDC Resources for businesses and employers: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC General business frequently asked questions: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

Federal OSHA: www.osha.gov

Federal NIOSH: www.niosh.gov

AIHA - Reopening: Guidance for Worship Services and Religious Gatherings and Reopening: Guidance for General Business - American Industrial Hygienist Association: www.AIHA.org

Handwashing

www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

MDH: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/>

Social distancing

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

Housekeeping

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Reopening: Guidance for Worship Services and Religious Gatherings and Reopening: Guidance for General Business - American Industrial Hygienist Association - www.AIHA.org

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of CoVID-19

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist, MDH:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf>

Training

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html

www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf