

Dear Friends in Christ,

June 3, 2020

By decision of the church council, First Lutheran Church of Kirkland, Illinois will reopen its doors for in-person worship services on Saturday June 13, and Sunday June 14. Some of our people are very eager to gather with others again; others are more hesitant. We encourage you to make your own choices about attending worship with others at this point. A task force of council members, Worship & Music team members, and other First Lutheran members agreed upon the following policies and practices, which may help you in your decision.

- We will return to our longstanding practice of two services: Saturdays at 5:30 PM, and Sundays at 9:00 AM. Having two services helps limit the size of each gathering, making social distancing easier to maintain. We will continue providing live stream worship, on both Saturdays and Sundays, for those who need to stay home by choice or necessity.
- Social distancing will be practiced (6 feet between people/families – every other pew). We won't share the peace individually. Children will remain seated with their families during the children's sermon. As we have now entered the summer months, Sunday School will not be meeting.
- A big issue, and an emotional one, is the wearing of masks. Some feel very strongly that masks should be worn by everyone. Others feel just as strongly that they should not be required to wear them. Here is the decision of the task force: We encourage the wearing of masks. But if you are uncomfortable wearing them, we ask that you sit on the left-hand side of the sanctuary. (Pastor will not be wearing a mask. His location at the pulpit and the altar creates more than enough distance to make this quite safe.)
- Ushers will be stationed at the entrance doors, who will open the doors for people as they arrive. That way there will not be multiple people touching the door handles. The ushers will also assist with the use of the elevator.
- Worship bulletins will be on a table in the narthex for you to pick up as you arrive. There will be hand sanitizer there as well, which we encourage you to use. An offering plate will also be there. Please place your offerings in that plate as you enter or as you leave, as we will not be passing the plates during the service.
- Hymnals: if you already have a hymnal at home, please bring that copy with you every Sunday. More instructions regarding hymnals will be given during the services.
- If you have any symptoms of illness (fever, cough, etc.), or if you know you have been near someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you have traveled by airplane in the past week, please stay home and worship online.

Of course, we can't possibly anticipate everything. Let us be patient and understanding of one another. We fondly hope that the time is soon coming when this situation, which I like to call "our temporary abnormal", will be over! Then, God willing, we will return to what has always been normal for us – the full and close fellowship of the congregation, without having to follow strange and unusual practices. We know that time is coming, either here on earth or in heaven forever. God has promised it:

“This was the oath He swore to our father Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies, *free to worship Him without fear*, holy and righteous in His sight all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:73, and LBW pp.134-135)

Sincerely in Christ,  
Pastor Carl Rasmussen