

## **St. John's Lutheran Church, Williams Township Protocols for reopening the church after shutdown from COVID-19.**

**At this time, we plan to reopen the building for worship on Sunday, July 5.** If we are unable to properly clean the church prior to that date, we will postpone until July 12. Either way, Council will activate the telephone chain to inform everyone. You can also check our website for the most current information at [stjohnswilliams.com](http://stjohnswilliams.com).

**First, and most importantly: Many of our members are in the “at risk” age group. Please don't feel that you have to attend worship in person just because it will be possible to do so. The health and well-being of our members is our primary concern.**

We will record the service and will continue to post it on Facebook and YouTube. An audio only version on a CD will also be available for those without computer access.

The protocols listed below for reopening were developed by a Planning Team using a number of available resources. The Team members are: Jackie Eagle, Kathy Mathews, Jane Patriarca, Rob Weidner, and Pr. Paul.

1. The church will be thoroughly cleaned according to CDC guidelines prior to reopening. Everything will be removed from the pews. All surfaces that are frequently touched will be cleaned each week as well.
2. To promote safety and to reduce the amount of cleaning necessary each week, the Fellowship Hall will be closed and there will be no social hour after worship.
3. Everyone will enter the church building through the front doors. The kitchen door will be locked. An usher will be at the front doors to help keep people socially distant. Unless you need to use the chair lift, please proceed directly up the right-hand stairs and into the sanctuary.
4. An usher will direct you to the next available pew. We will fill in the pews from front to back, alternating sides. Bulletins will already be in the pews used for seating. Other pews will be marked “Do not use.”
5. Related individuals may sit together. However, if the group is three or larger, then no one else should sit in that pew. One or two individuals may sit at each end of a pew for a maximum of four people per pew.
6. After worship, we will leave from back to front, alternating sides. An usher will direct you. Please proceed directly down the stairs and outside the building. Pr. Paul will not greet people on their way out.
7. Although not strictly required for churches, masks are to be worn at all times when inside the building. Those leading worship may remove their mask when in the chancel area and socially distanced from the congregation.
8. There will be no congregational singing, either liturgy or hymns. Music will be provided by our Praise Team; and if you wish, you are invited to hum along or mouth the words quietly into your mask.
9. There will be no communion for at least the first few weeks until we become comfortable with the “new” way we have to worship.
10. All materials needed for worship will be printed in the bulletin. We ask that you take the bulletin with you when you leave to avoid others having to handle it.

11. The offering plate will be placed in the rear of the church and will not be passed around during the service.
12. Hand sanitizers will be placed around the church; however, because they still are difficult to obtain, we encourage you to bring your own as well.
13. The rest rooms will be cleaned and available; however, we ask that you use them only if necessary.
14. Remember to avoid touching your face while in church and to wash your hands when you get home.

This is new for all of us, and we will appreciate your patience as we iron out any “wrinkles” in the first few weeks.

Above all, please stay safe.