

RE GATHERING IN PERSON  
SAINT LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL  
SILVER SPRING, MD

Adopted by Council September 13, 2021

*Look not to your own interests but to the interest of others...  
Love one another as I have loved you.*

The advisory committee would like to provide an update on Saint Luke's planned reopening. Recently, the advisory committee met again and reviewed the current plans for opening as provided in the plan approved by Council in May.

The advisory committee agreed that the available data and guidance reviewed from CDC, the State of Maryland, and Montgomery County, support continuing to move forward with the reopening of Saint Luke facilities. However, the advisory committee continues to track the recommendations made by these federal, state, and local authorities, and may need to change plans as warranted. Unfortunately, there is no single metric that can be used to make decisions about reopening or closing the facilities. Rather the advisory committee will monitor all the available data and if changes are recommended will bring all changes to the Council. Every effort will be made to bring recommendations to the Council before any actions are taken. However, it may be necessary to make urgent changes as needed to maintain the safety of all.

As a reminder, remember that this plan for reopening may be different than other businesses or churches, but we have developed this plan to maximize both safety and inclusivity as we return in person. Attending in person is a risk each person needs to consider for themselves. Please know parents will need to make their own decisions regarding unvaccinated children returning in person. We continue to be hopeful about reopening. We have created a more detailed description of reopening plans below.

### **Worship**

We hope to resume in-person worship Sunday, October 3, 2021. To safely resume in-person worship, all attendees will be required to wear masks and remain socially distanced at all times while inside the church building. While we will not specifically require proof of vaccination to attend in-person worship, we are discouraging any people over 12 years of age who are unvaccinated to attend in-person worship. We are putting these measures in place because we recognize that many children at this time are not eligible to be vaccinated so we do this to keep everyone, especially our children, safe.

We will offer in-person word and sacrament worship at 8:45 and 11:15 a.m. (English) The 8:45 a.m. service will also continue to be livestreamed. These times have been chosen to allow proper time to maintain health and safety measures between services. In addition, each in-person worship will be limited to approximately 40-50 worshippers. We will be creating a sign-up process that we hope will be both easy and fair. The second and fourth Sunday at 5:00 p.m. (Spanish) will continue to be virtual, however, Holy Communion in the Spanish language will be offered once a month in an outdoor setting.

As we move forward, we will continue to reassess the situation and consider changing the in-person limit for each service.

#### Safety Procedures for in-person worship:

- 1. Unvaccinated people over the age of 12 should not attend worship in person until further notice.**
- 2. Masks will be required at all times (properly covering nose and mouth).** The only exception will be those who are in the chancel leading worship. (masks will be available at the entrance if needed)
- 3. Social Distancing will be practiced.** Pews will have markers where individuals or families may be seated in pods.
- 4. Do not come to worship in-person if you are feeling ill in any way.**
- 5. Advanced sign-up will be required.** If you sign up and can no longer attend, let us know so others can attend. Also if needed the sign-up information will be used for contact tracing.
- 6. Entering the church for worship:** Kindly use either the Highland and Dale / Narthex doors. You must follow the directions provided by the ushers. The ushers will be giving specific instructions about seating and dismissal. Please wait until the ushers have guided you in entering and leaving the worship service.
- 7. Please stay in your pods except if you need to use the restroom.** Only one person at a time will be permitted in each restroom.
- 8. Doors will open to the church 20 minutes prior to each Sunday morning service**
- 9. Singing will not be permitted during worship, although, humming is encouraged.** Softly spoken responses are also encouraged.
- 10. Offering plates will not be passed during the service.** There will be a stationary location for receiving the Offering. You are also encouraged to continue to provide your offering on-line. [www.saintlukegive.us](http://www.saintlukegive.us)
- 11. Passing of the Peace through physical contact should be limited to those within your own pod.** You may acknowledge others outside your pod but without physical contact and while maintaining social distancing.
- 12. Holy Communion will be offered at each service in a safe manner.** Clear directions will be shared.
- 13. Worship Service Bulletins will be limited in paper copies.** You are encouraged to bring your own device to follow the service. Extra devices will be available as well.
- 14. Additional safety measures:**
  - a. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in multiple locations

- b. Fireside Room hospitality will not be available until further notice

### **Choir/Music Program**

Until further notice Dr. Truche will continue to secure a limited number of musicians.

Until further notice anthems from any choirs will remain virtual.

### **Faith Formation**

Faith Formation classes will continue to be offered virtually. However, for some classes, an in-person option will also be available. While we will not specifically require proof of vaccination to attend in-person faith formation, we are discouraging any adults who are unvaccinated to attend in-person. We are putting these measures in place because we recognize that many children at this time are not eligible to be vaccinated so we do this to keep everyone, especially our children, safe.

- 1. Unvaccinated people over the age of 12 should not come to Faith Formation classes in person until further notice.**
- 2. Masks will be required at all times (properly covering nose and mouth).**
- 3. Social Distancing will be practiced at all times.**
- 4. Do not come to Faith Formation classes if you are feeling ill in any way.**
5. Faith Formation classes for those up through Confirmation age will be convened outdoors in tents.
6. Groups are asked to stay in assigned spaces while using the facility/property.
7. Food is permitted outside, but must be commercially prepared
8. Serving / eating of food is not permitted inside the facility.
9. Only one person at a time will be permitted in each restroom.

### **Small groups (30 people or fewer per group) from Saint Luke requesting to use facilities**

We encourage small groups to continue to meet virtually as much as possible. Those who wish to meet in person, please consider also meeting in a hybrid fashion to welcome those who may not be able to attend in person. In person groups must follow these important rules. Failure to follow these rules will result in loss of privileges to meet in the building. We have developed these rules for the health and safety of all people using the building.

- 1. Unvaccinated people over the age of 12 should not any meetings in person.**
- 2. Masks will be required at all times (properly covering nose and mouth).**
- 3. Social Distancing will be practiced at all times.**

4. **Do not attend in person if you are feeling ill in any way.**
5. At the present time, we encourage groups to meet virtually as much as possible.
6. If meeting in person, we strongly discourage unvaccinated people over the age of 12 from attending in-person meetings in the facilities.
7. Meetings must be scheduled in advance through the staff liaison for the group. Assignments of rooms will be based on the size of the group and availability.
8. Groups are asked to stay in assigned space while using the facility/property.
9. Food is permitted outside, but must be commercially prepared
10. Serving / eating of food is not permitted inside the facility.
11. Only one person at a time will be permitted in each restroom.

**Small groups (less than 30 people per group) not affiliated with Saint Luke requesting to use facilities**

We encourage non Saint Luke small groups to continue to meet virtually as much as possible. Those who wish to meet in person must follow these important rules. Failure to follow these rules will result in loss of privileges to meet in the building. We have developed these rules for the health and safety of all people using the building.

1. **Unvaccinated people over the age of 12 should not attend any meetings in person.**
2. **Masks will be required at all times (properly covering nose and mouth).**
3. **Social Distancing will be practiced at all times.**
4. **Do not attend in person if you are feeling ill in any way.**
5. Meetings must be scheduled in advance and coordinated with the facilities manager.
6. Meetings will only be allowed in the Great Hall until further notice.
7. Groups will not be permitted into other areas of the building except the Great Hall and the nearby restrooms.
8. Serving / eating of food is not permitted inside the facility.
9. Please limit the use of the restrooms to one person at a time