

*Lutheran Church of the Epiphany
35 Fulton Avenue
Hempstead, NY 11550*

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Rev. Marianne K. Tomecek, Interim Pastor

Information about steps necessary for re-opening of Epiphany Lutheran Church
and Congregational Survey

In order to follow the requirements of New York State and the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these are the changes that your Council members have concluded will have to be made in order to hold worship in the building of Epiphany Lutheran Church.

Anyone attending a worship service will have to wear a mask during the service. You may wish to wear gloves. If you are not feeling well, or if you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, fever, body aches, loss of sense of smell, etc.), we ask that you not attend the worship service until you feel better.

Anyone who attends worship will have to make a reservation by 5 PM of the Saturday before the day of worship, giving us the number who will worship.

At the present time, we are permitted to have only 25% of the people who are allowed by law to be in a meeting space. The maximum occupancy of the Nave or Sanctuary is 304. The maximum occupancy of the Fellowship Hall is 150. In both cases, we must keep six feet of distance between individuals or family groups who live together – in all directions. That gives us 36 seats in the Nave on the main floor and 6 more in the balcony.

We will ask members to enter the building through the main door on Fulton Avenue and come into the Nave as they are guided by the Ushers.

Since we need to know who is present at each worship service in order to track and trace if someone at one of the services develops COVID-19 after a worship service, we'll ask you or your family group to tell an usher your name or the names in your group so that we can record them and a telephone number for each person attending.

Since fresh air is safer than recirculated air, windows will be open during the worship service. Depending on the temperature, we might be able to purchase filters for our air conditioning units to purify the air.

You will be asked to follow a designated path so that you don't get close to other worshipers, and to take a specific seat so that we can be sure that the required six feet of distance between people or between family groups who live together can be maintained.

During the worship service, because of the infectiousness of COVID-19 through droplet or aerosol infection, we will **not be able to:**

**sing together,
pray aloud together,
recite the creed aloud together,
recite or chant the psalm aloud together, or
touch each other when sharing the peace.**

We're still working out how music will be provided during the service. You will be welcome to clap during hymns or service music.

We will continue to email the bulletins to everyone who has email each week and we'll ask you to print out the bulletin for your own use, or else bring a device that has the bulletin on it. We'll have a small number of printed bulletins for people who do not have access to email. If you bring or take a printed bulletin, you'll be asked to take it with you when you leave the building.

The offering will be taken by worshipers leaving an offering (in an envelope or otherwise) in an offering plate that is placed near the door.

Holy Communion will be administered without wine. It has always been theologically valid for Lutherans to commune in full with just one element – either bread or wine. We're still working out how this will work, but we may give you a wafer that was placed in a zip lock bag by an altar guild member who was wearing gloves during the process. The bags will sit for at least 24 hours before the service to insure protection from the virus.

At the end of the service, you will be asked to leave the Church building using a specific route so that you don't get closer than six feet from another worshiper.

There will not be any fellowship time after the service. You will be asked to leave the building as soon as the service has been completed. There will not be any greeting at the door by the pastor or other representative of the congregation. It will be possible to have a "zoom coffee hour" at a later time if members wish to have that interaction.

If anyone uses the restroom before, during or after the service, it will have to be cleaned before anyone else can use the facilities. We will have to employ someone to do this.

Having learned the above about how we will have to change the usual way that we worship, we'd like to know if you intend to attend worship services under these conditions for the indefinite future, until we hear that the state of the virus in our area allows for changes that are closer to our worship practices before the pandemic began.

In Christ,

Congregational Council

PLEASE RETURN YOUR RESPONSE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED. YOU MAY ALSO CALL THE CHURCH OR LEAVE YOUR RESPONSE ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE. (516) 481-9344. THANK YOU!

Given this description of how worship will have to be maintained under the current guidelines and laws, will you attend worship in person?

_____ Yes, I will attend worship in person

_____ Number of people who will attend worship in person

_____ No, I will not be attending in person at this time

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE # _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____