

Zion Lutheran Church

17927 Dice Road
Hemlock, Michigan 48626
989-642-5909

May 25, 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Zion Post Covid -19 Exile - A congregational letter was sent out the end of March towards the beginning of our widespread isolation, and now we are sending this information out towards what we hope will be the end of stricter isolation. It is our prayer that you will lovingly submit to caring for each other through these prayerfully proposed guidelines for us all.

List of **Service Precautions** for when we return to church for public worship:

1. Zion will follow the recommendations of our Church Council and our government in returning to “regular” on campus worship at Zion. (The Center of Disease Control (CDC), along with the Saginaw Circuit Lutheran Churches are looking at this point, following governmental guidelines to re-open with proper restrictions at the earliest on Sunday June 7.) The Saginaw area LCMS pastors have agreed to wait to open for worship together as a group of LCMS local churches, on **Sunday, June 7**.
2. We will use common sense; if you are in a high risk category, or are sick or have a fever or have been in contact with anyone sick or the coronavirus the last 14 days, stay, home and stay safe for yourself and other’s safety.
3. The church has been and will be sanitized weekly by our janitor according to the CDC guidelines. In between weekly services we will seek as best as possible to sanitize any common use areas, door handles, restrooms, etc. We also discourage anyone from using the building during the week.
4. Before you come to church make sure you bring your mask or other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items with you. The church has a limited supply of hand sanitizer.
5. With warmer weather the entry doors to the church will be propped open, so that no one needs to touch them.
6. People will be stationed at the door (outside in good weather/inside in poor weather) maintaining proper 6-foot distancing, recording names, and offering hand sanitizer.
7. Ushers will direct people to pews filling from the front to the back. We encourage people to sit as families, but to maintain 6-foot personal social distancing space between families. We will have pews taped to mark where not to sit, filling the pulpit side (East side) of the church to be orderly and thus have less to be cleaned.
8. The attendance pads and hymnals will be removed from the sanctuary (worshippers are encouraged to bring their own hymnals) until further notice. We will not use the hymn boards, but will project the entire service on the front screens.
9. During greeting time there will be NO hand shaking, no hugging or holy kiss. Greet one another with a word of peace and blessing, whether in the church, narthex, or outside.
10. Our choir and other worship leaders will be limited and maintain 6-foot social distancing while leading us in worship.
11. There will be no passing of the offering plate. As has been done with Door Offerings, we will provide bulletins to pick up as you enter church, and an offering plate for you to place your offerings and tithes as you enter or leave services.
12. Communion procedures will be demonstrated for you first by the Elders.
13. To help us maintain social distancing as we leave church:
 - a. Ushers will excuse worshipers pew by pew, starting from the back pew.
 - b. Pastor will not shake hands following service, but will greet from a safe distance.
 - c. Coffee fellowship hour will be suspended until further notice.
14. All activities or groups meeting at church will be suspended until at least **August 30th**. This includes Zion’s groups such as Choir, Bible Studies, and any Fellowship Hall receptions and other meetings and activities. Check with the leaders about restarting times.

15. We ask that no one enter into the school portion of the building (on the East side), or the Fellowship Hallway (on the West side), and avoid being in either of the hallways.

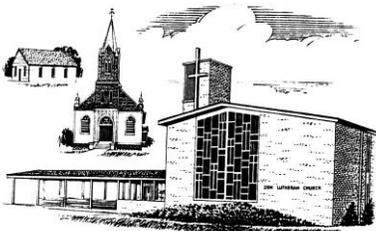
16. We will have worship services at 9:30 on Sundays, and they will be videotaped for anyone who wishes to worship online when they are uploaded onto Zion's website or Zion's Facebook.

Pastor Hauser's Final Thoughts After Covid-19: If there is one word to describe how we must navigate re-assimilation after COVID-19 exile, it's this: GRACE. Some people will be confident, others cautious and most every stage in-between. There will be disagreements over acceptable post-COVID social norms between friends, church members and family. Hurt feelings will abound if we're not careful, and it will go a long way if we all submit to following the guidelines thoughtfully and prayerfully put together by our God-given leaders. Extend lots of GRACE. Everyone is different. Wouldn't it be terrible if after Covid-19 social distancing passes, we "social distance" ourselves from others because of our inability to love others who approach Covid-19 differently than we do? It is extremely important that the church be a loving place full of GRACE. Let us each seek to lead the way showing GRACE, by not communicating judgment and criticisms of others ways of approaching the virus, but respond instead to Jesus' love for us and all others.

God bless us all as we look to worship again together, to thank the Lord and sing His praises!

Zion Church Council

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