



Covid-19 Task Force Ministry Recommendations

A living document that can be revised as needed,
as we continue to learn how to be part of God’s Church in this time and place.

Approved by MLC Congregation Council on March 23, 2021.

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1 – Theological Statement

Tending to and advocating for the wellbeing of all people, especially the most vulnerable among us, is a recurring theme that runs throughout our scriptures. MLC has an incredible history of engaging in ministries that support the spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical wellness of God’s people near and far.

The health and safety of the members, staff, and guests remains our highest priority. At the same time, we continue to find ways to foster our life together and strengthen our mission for the future.

In short, when the coronavirus presents us with limitations, the Spirit gifts us with creativity. No matter what, MLC will continue to Share God’s Word, Show God’s Love, and Serve God’s World.

2 – COVID Guidelines (initially for all phases)

Masks	Masks are required by all persons over 2 years old who enter MLC for any reason. No exceptions. Masks will be available.
Physical Distancing	All people who are not in the same household must physically distance 6 ft
Hand Cleaning (hand sanitizer or washing hands)	Hands need to be sanitized prior to entrance to MLC, after coughing, sneezing, touching of face. Hand sanitizer will be available.
COVID Symptoms	Anyone who has a cough, sore throat, temperature greater than 100.0, headache, or generally is not feeling well cannot enter MLC.
Food Consumption, including the elements of communion	No consumption of any food or drink will be allowed. Communion elements must be eaten after leaving the building.
Personal Items	Limit items brought in to the facility, to only necessary items. Keep them with you at all times, do not set them down unnecessarily
Personal Contact	No hand shaking, personal contact. Be respectful of other's personal space.
Purposeful Pathways	Go directly to the sanctuary or office. Bathrooms will be open but do not walk around the church, do not enter closed areas (coat room, coffee area, kitchen, offices)
Hymnals, bulletins, pencils, worship cards	Will be removed from sanctuary. Video screens used only, no bulletins.
Seating in Sanctuary	Members will be ushered in and out being seated in open or available pews. Members are not to sit in roped off pews. Only members of the same household will be allowed to sit together within the sanctuary.
Gathering Space	Please do not congregate and socialize in the gathering space. All tables and chairs will be removed.
Pre-Registration for Attending a Service	Required
Possible Exposure	Contact the church office if you have attended a service in the last 2 weeks and either test positive or have been exposed to a COVID positive individual. Confidentiality will be maintained.
Entrance Doors	Enter only from main entrance doors under canopy or Broadhead Street doors.
Offering	Central collection box. Each person deposits own offering envelope
Respectful Interactions	If anyone attending an in-person event becomes uncomfortable as a result of another person's behavior, they can respectfully describe the specific behavior that they are concerned about. The recipient of that feedback should respectfully acknowledge the comments and adjust his/her behavior so that all guidelines are complied with.
Agree to Leave if Don't Follow Guidelines	If an usher or other staff member asks you to leave the building for not following the guidelines, you agree to leave as requested.

3 – Four Phases – The Metrics

	Currently in Phase 1 (as of 3/15)	Phase 2 (Re-open)	Phase 3 (Re-open)	Phase 4 (Re-open)
% of People Vaccinated	<20%	21-39%	40-59%	>60%
# of new cases/day; 7-day avg./100,000	>50 cases	(Moderate) >10; <=50 Cases	(Moderate) >10; <=50 Cases	(Low) <10
% of Positive Tests, 7-day avg.	>10 %	>5 %	<5%	<5%

- SOURCE: All of these numbers are based off **Dane County** statistics found on the Public Health Madison & Dane County website: <https://www.publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus/data>
- Church shouldn't **advance to the next phase until ALL THREE metrics are met or exceeded.**
- These metrics are to be met for **TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS** before advancing to the next phase.
- The data on vaccinations will be for Dane County, at this time it is not differentiated between receiving just one or both doses.

4 – Four Phases – Worship Services & Considerations

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Worship	Drive-In & Online	Drive-In, Online, & In-Person (Attendance: 30 in congregation, up to 15 leaders – as a pilot)	Drive-In, Online, & In-Person (Attendance: Determined by Phase 2 Experience)	Drive-In, Online, & In-Person (Attendance: Determined by Phase 3 Experience)

Worship Considerations

Phase 2:

- One in-person Sunday morning service only.
- Volunteer at doors check attendance, contact information, and monitors masks.
- Masks required for all over the age of two, no medical exceptions.
- Physical distancing required.
- Those sitting together must be in the same household (exceptions need to receive permission).
- Shortened Services.

- No: bulletins, hymnals, physical sharing of the peace, passing of the offering plate, unison speaking.
- Ushers guide dismissal by rows.
- Singing restricted to musicians.
- Registration required (For admittance and contact tracing)
- Plexiglass barrier at AV booth & communion kneelers at worship platform

NOTE: As we re-open worship, we are going to start with 30 as an attendance number plus worship leaders. As some procedures are worked out, that number will be revisited and adjusted.

Phase 3 and 4:

- Same as Phase 2, plus the adding of a Saturday evening in person service, possibly adding more pieces of the worship experience as determined by the previous phase's experience.

5 – Four Phases – What Worship & Church Ministries Look Like

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Communion	Drive-In or Drive Through	Drive-In or In-Person: Take elements home with you after worship	Same as Phase 2	Same as Phase 3
Indoor Weddings, Baptisms, & Funerals	Attendance: 15 + Staff	Attendance: 30 + Staff	Attendance: Determined by Phase 2 Experience	Attendance: Determined by Phase 3 Experience
Outdoor Weddings, Funerals, & Burials	Attendance: County Order	Attendance: County Order	Attendance: County Order	Attendance: County Order
Vocal Groups & Wind Ensembles	No	No	No	Unknown at this Time
Bell Choir	No	No	Attendance: County Order	Attendance: County Order
Nursery Care	No	No	Attendance: Unknown at this Time	Attendance: Unknown at this Time
Coffee, Meals, Fellowship	No	No	No	Unknown at this Time
Coat Rack	No	No	Yes	Yes
Office Hours	Mon-Thurs 9am- 2pm	Mon-Thurs 9am- 2pm	Unknown at this Time	Unknow at this Time

Group Meetings	Online	Online	Online Strongly Preferred & In-Person Attendance set by County Order (Attendance, Masks, Physical Distancing, Required)	Same as Phase 3
Faith Formation	Online & Take Home Kits	Online & Take Home Kits	Online Strongly Preferred & In-Person Attendance set by County Order (Attendance, Masks, Physical Distancing, Required)	Same as Phase 3
Pastoral Care Visits	Online & Phone Calls	Online & Phone Calls	Online Strongly Preferred & In-Person Attendance set by County Order (Attendance, Masks, Physical Distancing, Required)	Same as Phase 3

6 – Registration Process for Worship

Background

- The registration process will be handled by MLC office staff.
- MLC members without a computer/internet connection are sent the e-news on a weekly basis through the postal mail.
- Total capacity for in-person worship will be determined as indicated by the current COVID phase in which MLC is operating. Reservation capacity will be limited by this predetermined number.
- Staff and worship assistants will not be required to use the registration process and will not be included in the total capacity of worshipers who can register
- The in-person worship reservation process will continue until the Church Council decides to discontinue its use.
- The in-person worship reservation process may be reinstated by the Church Council as determined by COVID metrics and other determining factors.
- The in-person worship reservation process may be adjusted or changed as we evaluate the process.

Process

1. An electronic survey will be sent to the congregation in the weekly e-news to gauge how many people want to attend in-person worship at this time.
 - a. The office staff would have live-access to the survey.
 - b. Included with the article and the link to the survey is an invitation for members to call the church office to answer the brief survey over the phone, if they prefer.

2. The number of people interested in attending in-person worship, along with the attendance limit established by the current phase, will determine the number of services for which people can register. Each registration cycle will include the predetermined number of services.
 - a. For example, if 90 people want to attend and 30 people are allowed in worship, the registration cycle would include four weekends (one service per weekend). This would provide members who did not complete the survey with the opportunity to register for available openings.
3. An electronic registration form will be sent to the congregation in the weekly e-news.
 - a. The office staff would have live-access to the registration form.
 - b. Included with the article and the link to the registration form is an invitation for members to call the church office to sign up for worship over the phone, if they prefer.
4. People may sign up for only one service per registration cycle.
5. If the church office sees that a person/family has signed up more than one Sunday per registration cycle, a polite phone call will be made to clarify which Sunday they would like to attend.
6. Under the preferred Sunday date, each family member's name must be listed in a separate box, including children. (If there are three family members wanting to attend, three boxes must be completed).
 - a. Only the names listed on the attendance sheet will be admitted into worship.
7. Registration closes at noon on the Thursday before the upcoming Sunday.
 - a. At noon, the church office will lock the registration process for the upcoming Sunday and no more names can be added.
 - b. The church office will print the expected attendance list and include the phone number and email address on file for that person/family.
 - c. Forward this list to Gary Toboyek or leader of service protocol.
8. On Sunday, volunteers will monitor the sign-in process using sheets listing the names and contact information for those expected to attend worship.
 - a. For the purposes of contact tracing, when the volunteers check people in for worship, they will double check the accuracy of the contact information.
9. The attendance/contact information sheets will be kept in the church office.

7 – Facility Use Agreement

McFarland Lutheran Church (MLC) has taken great measures to minimize the presence and spread of the COVID-19 virus. Specific cleaning protocols, including disinfection and sanitization, have been established and will be used prior to all scheduled events. MLC also requires all church staff and congregational members to follow identified COVID-19 related guidelines based on recommendations established by Public Health Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) and U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This includes wearing face masks, physical distancing and frequent hand washing/sanitizing. Other MLC-adopted COVID-19 guidelines include:

***** Insert the MLC guidelines here *****

All users and visitors who are present in any church facilities are required to follow all the above-noted MLC COVID-19 guidelines adopted by the congregation.

In addition to agreeing to the stipulations contained in the “User Group Church Facility Use Request & Agreement Form”, by signing this “COVID-19 Facility Use Agreement”:

The undersigned responsible person acknowledges that he/she has read and understands the MLC COVID-19 guidelines contained in this document and is responsible for the compliance of all attendees at the approved event.

The responsible person further accepts any and all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 for the group and agrees to hold MLC harmless from any claims for damages and/or liability that may arise from exposure to disease-causing organisms including COVID-19.

Type of event: _____

Date of event: _____

Current attendance limit allowed by Dane County order: _____

Number of people attending event: _____

Name of responsible person: _____

Signature of responsible person: _____

Phone number of responsible person: _____

Date signed: _____

8 – Fall Back & Outbreak Plans

Fall Back Plan

- Track metrics: When any one of three metrics falls to previous phase, we shift entirely back to that phase.
- Timing of a fall back if we’re in Phase 2: If a metric falls before Thursday, cancel in-person worship for the following week or weeks. It will stay at that level until all metrics are once again satisfied.
- Timing of fall back if we’re in Phase 3 or 4: If a metric falls Thursday, continue with Sunday worship as planned, but restart the sign-up process for the fewer number of attendees for the following weeks. If the metric falls before Thursday, restart the sign-up process beginning with that coming Sunday.

- Someone from a group of volunteers calls each person signed up for that Sunday's worship to let them know that worship is cancelled and that a new sign-up is being distributed. These volunteers would have access to the new registration sheet and can take sign-ups over the phone.
- Facebook and Newsletter communication about going back a phase (**see Appendix A** for script)
- If going back from Phase 3 to phase 2, reinitiate sign-up process for smaller service sizes (**See Appendix B** for script)

Outbreak Plan

- If the church receives notice that a worshipper has received a positive test result:
 - Respond pastorally to the infected person and their immediate family. See if they have immediate needs.
 - Find out which in-person/physical church events they attended in the last 14 days. Look up the attendance list.
 - Contact the local health department:
 - Public Health Madison & Dane County
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., City/County Building Room 507
Madison, WI 53703-3346
Phone: 608-266-4821
 - Use your "Positive Exposure" communication template (see **Appendix C** for script) to reach out to people who were at those events and recommend testing.
 - Notify local church leaders:
 - The McFarland Lutheran Church Council
 - Use your communication template to reach out to the whole church with general information (see **Appendix D** for script)
- No matter the timing, if there are two or more positive exposures, at the same service, then we will cancel in-person worship for 14 days from the exposure, which is one Sunday service.
- Make arrangements to have the church building thoroughly cleaned after 24 hours have gone by since the exposed person was present.
- If worship is cancelled for one Sunday:
 - Someone calls each person signed up for that Sunday's worship to let them know that worship is cancelled. (See **Appendix E** for Script)
 - Facebook and Newsletter communication about the one-week cancellation of the worship registration (see **Appendix F** for two scripts)

9 – Cleaning

MLC custodial staff will clean high-touch surfaces and bathrooms off of the Great Hallway after each in-person service. The following cleaning guidelines will be used.

- The following supplies will be provided by the church for cleaning: facemasks, gloves, cleaning products, cloths, and sponges. May need to consider additional protective gear (gowns) depending on cleaning/disinfectant product used.

- Clean and disinfect visibly dirty surfaces. Disinfect high touch surfaces daily. Follow the recommended instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
- Bathrooms would still need to be accessible for worship services and can be cleaned with the typical cleaners used previously.
- Clean electronics (keyboard, remote controls, tablets) with product on EPA list.
- Clean linens, clothing, and towels using warmest appropriate setting. Wash hands after handling dirty laundry or wear gloves.
- Disposable gloves should be used and discarded after use. Reusable gloves can be used again if only for cleaning/disinfecting. Always wash hands after wearing gloves.
- Hands should be washed for 20 seconds after removing gloves, after contact with a sick person, and after the usual circumstances (blowing nose, coughing, touching face, using bathroom, etc).
- Air exchangers are recommended, if possible. Consider running the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for a minimum of 2 hours before, during, and for 2 hours after the building is occupied.
- When able, open doors and windows to increase fresh air flow and place fans in windows to draw indoor air outside.

10 – Kitchen Usage & Food Prep Protocol

The fellowship that occurs over food continues to be important to MLC. Use of the kitchen is not yet allowed. The Covid-19 Task Force and Council will continue to discuss this topic and how we may safely and responsibly use the kitchen. This will be addressed in future communications.

11 – Signage

- Signs will be laminated for easy cleaning
- Posted on the entryway doors:
 - Masks are required
 - “We’re taking all thoughtful precautions but there’s no guarantee of safety from Covid-19 on the premises”
 - Reminder to use hand sanitizer
- Posted in the Gathering Space and high visibility areas, and on the screen in the sanctuary:
 - Reminder to stay six-feet apart
- Miscellaneous:
 - Posted on bathroom mirrors: Reminder to wash your hands.
 - Posted on coffee pot and coat area: “Temporarily Closed due to Covid-19”.
 - Posted on CLM doors: “For Sunday Worship, Enter Though the Canopy Entrance or Broadhead Street doors”.

- Posted on movable wall in Grand Hallway: “Sunday Worshippers, Please Don’t Pass this Point”

12 – Appendices

Appendix A: Script for Facebook & Newsletter about going back a phase and a new sign-up being distributed

Going Back a Phase

MLC’s Covid-19 Task Force has established metrics that determine what is considered to be safe ministry practices according to Dane County reporting. Unfortunately, [one/two/all three] of the metrics breached a threshold for safety.

At this time, we are returning to Phase [1/2/3] and the corresponding worship and ministry guidelines.

(If going back to Phase 2 or 3:) For those interested in attending in-person worship, a new worship registration form is in the [weekly e-news (for Facebook) /attached (for newsletter)].

(If going back to Phase 1): Unfortunately, we are not be able to offer in-person worship at this time. We hope you continue to join us for drive-in worship at 9am or Sanctuary Live on Facebook at 10am.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the Covid-19 Task Force.

Appendix B: Bullet Pointed script for volunteers rescheduling worshippers

- The Covid-19 Task Force established parameters around safest practices for in-person worship, including the number of people allowed in worship.
- Unfortunately, Dane County reporting has breached one of the established metrics [insert data if wanted]
- This means MLC is transitioning back to Phase [#] from Phase [#].
- You are signed up for worship this coming Sunday [date].
- In this new phase, only [number] of people can attend worship.
- No easy way to reduce the number, so a new registration process has begun.
- You will be able to find the link in the weekly e-news, or I have the registration form in front of me and you can register with me right now if you’d like.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the Covid-19 Task Force.

Appendix C: Positive Exposure Communication to in-person attendees

[date]

Dear [Insert name(s)],

This letter is to notify you that [a] community member or staff member[s] at [Insert place of worship name] has tested positive for COVID-19. We are actively working with the [insert county/city] Health Department to quickly identify, notify, and quarantine anyone who may have come into close contact with them and who may be at risk of getting sick. We are also cleaning and disinfecting to control the spread of illness.

About COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a new coronavirus. It spreads from person to person through droplets created when we cough, sneeze, talk, sing or laugh. Most people—especially young people—who get COVID-19 have mild illness, similar to having a cold or the flu. However, in others it can cause severe illness, such as pneumonia.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (temperature 100.4°F or higher)
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Chills
- Muscle/body aches
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

The CDC's website has good information about COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. It is important to remember that it can take up to two weeks for symptoms to appear after exposure.

What to Expect

If you had close contact with a person with COVID-19, you will receive notification/information from the [insert county/city] Health Department. If you did not have close contact with a person with COVID-19 in our [insert place of worship], you will not receive a contact from the health department. However, everyone in your household should continue to stay home as much as possible, wash their hands frequently, keep 6 feet away from others, wear a mask or cloth face covering in public, watch for symptoms of COVID-19, and seek care when sick.

Someone from the [insert county/city] Health Department may reach out to you with questions. Please assist with them as they work to investigate and control COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please call [Full name and position] at [phone #].

Sincerely,

[Print name], [Title]

Appendix D: *General Positive Exposure Communication for the Newsletter*

Positive Exposure

[date]

Hello Members of McFarland Lutheran-

A member of our congregation shared with the church's leadership that they had tested positive for Covid-19 and had recently [attended worship].

First and foremost, we pray for their health and a speedy recovery. Also, we thank them for letting the church know so we could employ necessary communication and cleaning steps.

We contacted the Dane County Public Health Office. [insert any pertinent information from that interaction]

We located the attendance record for the date that person was in worship. We notified those who were also in worship so they could be extra mindful of their own health and to encourage them to minimize their potential of spreading the virus.

[If applicable:] We also made arrangements for the worship space, gathering spaces, and bathrooms to be thoroughly cleaned.

[Insert any further relevant details about upcoming worship and ministry]

Please pray for the health and well-being of all who are suffering from and treating those with Covid-19.

If you have any questions, please call [Full name and position] at [phone #].
Sincerely,

[Print name], [Title]

Appendix E: *Bullet Pointed script for volunteers telling people worship has been cancelled for one week*

- The Covid-19 Task Force established parameters around safest practices for in-person worship.

- Two or more individuals in worship on [date] have tested positive.
- The Dane County Health Department and those who were also in worship have been notified. [A thorough cleaning has also happened).
- Part of the Task Force's parameters is to cancel any in-person worship or event for 14 days from the exposure, which means one Sunday Service on [date].
- We are cancelling the worship schedule for one week.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office.

Appendix F: Script for Facebook & Newsletter about a one-Sunday cancellation in Worship Registration

NEWSLETTER:

One-Week Cancellation in Worship Scheduling

MLC's Covid-19 Task Force has established protocols that strive to keep our members, guests, and staff as safe as possible. Unfortunately, we had two or more positive exposures in worship on [date].

Per the Task Force's protocols, the proper organizations and those in attendance have been contacted [and a thorough cleaning has taken place].

All in-person worship and activities have been cancelled for 14 days from the exposure, which means one Sunday service.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the Covid-19 Task Force.

FACEBOOK:

One-Week Cancellation in Worship Scheduling

MLC's Covid-19 Task Force has established protocols that strive to keep everyone as safe as possible. Unfortunately, we had two or more positive exposures in worship [date].

Among the safety and cleaning procedures established by the Task Force, all in-person worship has been cancelled for 14 days from the exposure, which means one Sunday service on [date].

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the Covid-19 Task Force.