

Returning to In-Person, Indoor Worship at Trinity Lutheran Church—

EASTER 2021 REOPENING

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."-Galatians 6:2

Dear Beloved at Trinity Lutheran Church,

In March 2021 the "Reopening Task Force" of Trinity's Church Council met, comprised of our Pastor, Council President, and members with medical, scientific, and business-reopening backgrounds. The task force carefully reviewed improving Covid data and hospital capacity across Greater New Haven, including high vaccination rates in our area. The task force revisited guidelines and best-practices from the CDC, State, City of New Haven, New England Synod, neighboring congregations, and our insurer. **The Task Force adopted a plan to resume in-person worship, inside our sanctuary, while strictly following the guidelines below, beginning on Easter Sunday, April 4.** We'll continue to monitor local conditions, and review and adjust as necessary.

While it will be good to return to indoor, in-person worship again, this will not be a "return" to pre-pandemic times. Worship will look and feel different, and even if you're vaccinated our usual socializing will be replaced by a wave from a safe distance. We must "bear one another's burdens" by protecting one another's health, "and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). We ask for God's help, and for your continued love for one another, demonstrated through the glad upholding of these guidelines below.

For the Reopening Task Force, --Pastor Mills+

Worship Guidelines: What Sundays will look like beginning Easter Day:

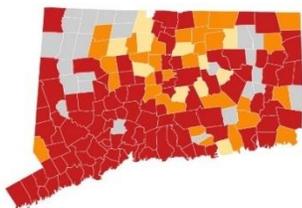


Online and Drive-In Services Continue

The safe online services we have come to depend on over the last year will continue unchanged. All services and studies will continue to be broadcast via Facebook Live. Occasional outdoor Drive-In Services of Holy Communion will continue, as announced.



Get Vaccinated when eligible to faithfully protect yourself and your neighbor! High-risk persons aged 60+ and/or with underlying health conditions **who have not yet been vaccinated** are encouraged to stay safer at home and join us online only.



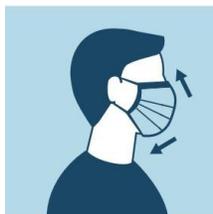
Town Alerts

The State of Connecticut tracks rates of COVID-19 spread by town, updated weekly. If New Haven and/or the town where you live is in the higher-spread **red level** alert category please exercise extra caution.



One-Way Entrance & Exiting

Entry will only be through the Church's Orange Street double-doors (except for those needing the handicapped ramp on the Wall Street side). Please wait for the door to be opened for you. Exit will only be through the Wall Street ramp door. This one-way pattern will help keep us properly distanced.



Masking

Upon entry each person over the age of 2 must wear a cloth or paper face-mask that covers both their mouth and nose at all times. Masks will be available for those without them. The only time the mask may be removed is for the few seconds of consuming Communion, then to be replaced immediately.



Distancing

As you enter Trinity you will see physical distancing markers in the form of a yellow "X" noting the 6' distance you must maintain from those outside your household. A minimum of 6' distance between households must be kept at all times, including in the parking lot and on the sidewalk, while entering, exiting, and while otherwise within the building. No hugs, handshakes, etc. yet!



Screening

As you enter the building through the main doors your temperature will be taken with a touchless thermometer, and you will be asked a series of health-screening questions, modeled on Yale-New Haven Hospital's screening. Especially since you are entering church you must answer honestly and completely, protecting the health of your fellow church members. If you are sick, have symptoms of Covid, have tested positive, or have been around other people who are sick, you must stay home out of Christian love.



Sanitization

You must sanitize your hands upon entering the building, using our touch-free sanitization stations. Please sanitize again upon exiting. The Church will be professionally cleaned and sanitized twice-weekly to ensure the cleanest possible environment. If you must use the restroom during the service, upon exiting please spray down all touch-surfaces with a bottle of sanitizer that will be in the restroom.



Seating

At the designated sign please stop and wait to be seated by an usher. You may no longer choose your (old favorite) pew, but must sit where directed or led by an usher. Entire pews and sections of pews will be closed-off by yellow rope or tape to ensure distancing. Seating will take place from front-to-back upon entry and from back-to-front upon exit, by household. Please sit where directed by the usher and remain in your pew throughout the service until dismissed by an usher.



Please RSVP so we can expect you

Please RSVP to the Church Office each week by Friday if you plan on attending services in-person the upcoming Sunday. This will ensure a seat for you, and help in the event that contact tracing is necessary. With a pre-pandemic seating capacity of over 600 we anticipate using a small percentage of our overall space, with room for 29 socially-distanced households.



Spoken

Singing expels more aerosols/particles than many other activities. For that reason, our services will be generally “spoken”, with no singing by the pastor, choir, or congregation. A designated cantor may sing in a safe manner to help enhance our worship. Otherwise the organ will be the “soloist” for hymns.



Holy Communion

Upon entering the sanctuary sealed Communion sets will be available for you to take and bring with you to your pew, consisting of a wafer host and cup of grape juice. These will have already been consecrated by Pastor at the altar. During Communion remain in your pew, remove your mask, open and eat the host and drink of the cup, and replace your mask. There will be no coming up to the altar rail. Please dispose of your empty cup in the designated basket upon exiting, and sanitize your hands.



No Shared Objects

Hymnals, flyers, and bulletins have been removed to minimize touching shared objects. Print a bulletin at home and bring if you need one, or just enjoy being present for worship. Your envelopes and offerings can be placed in a no-touch offering plate upon entering/exiting.



Common Areas Closed

The Parlor, Basement, Sunday School, Gathering Room, Auditorium, and all gathering spaces are closed, and the building remains closed except to Trinity worship services. Since masks must be worn at all times, no eating or drinking outside of Communion.



Fresh Airflow

Upper-level windows will be kept open to maximize fresh airflow in and to exhaust stale air out.