

# RETURNING TO PUBLIC WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

Revised by the COVID Response Steering Group: June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Adopted by the Congregation Council: June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*The Saints Peter and Paul COVID Response Steering Group met on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to review and revise the safety guidelines and expectations adopted by the Congregation Council a year ago in June 2020 prior to the reopening of in-person worship in July 2020. Based on guidance from the CDC, The Chicago Archdiocese, and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA, the Congregation Council has adopted the following recommendations of the Steering Group for public worship gatherings:*

## **Entering and Exiting the Church Facility:**

All entrances to the church facility will now be available for use. There will continue to be no formal receiving lines but Pastor Dennis will greet worshipers outside the building at the Woodside entrance following the service as weather permits.

Based on CDC recommendations and advice from health care professionals, we will no longer offer temperature screenings of persons entering the building, and we will no longer keep a log of persons who enter the church for contact tracing purposes.

## **Inside the Church Facility:**

Face coverings will no longer be required to enter the church facility but are still highly recommended. Going forward, we will create signs to be posted in the facility and include these guidelines on the “Welcome Page” at the website of the congregation advising that “masks are highly recommended, especially for those not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus.”

Masks or face coverings *will be required* for congregational singing and are still strongly encouraged when individuals are moving about the church facility, especially during the distribution of Communion or when entering or exiting the building. Supplies of hand sanitizer will continue to be available throughout the church building and frequent use of sanitizer is highly recommended, especially before reception of Communion.

The church has been cleaned regularly and extensively since re-opening. Extensive cleaning will continue along recommended guidelines. We will also continue to keep windows and doors open as much as possible and use ceiling fans to provide fresh air and ventilation.

Along with the rest of the building, the restrooms are extensively cleaned. We will continue to recommend one person occupancy at a time in each of the restrooms.

The kitchen will remain closed for the time being, although we are hopeful that we can revisit this at the end of summer or in the early fall to see if we can discuss serving coffee and refreshments following worship again.

### **Seating in the Sanctuary:**

Seating will now be available in every other row of the sanctuary, still allowing for adequate social distancing. Pews which are marked with the white bows near the center aisle are designated for seating.

Worship folders will still be available on tables at the entrances to the sanctuary but will not be passed out by greeters or ushers. Removable materials such as envelopes and welcome cards will be returned to the pews, although hymnals will still remain outside.

### **Worship:**

We will continue to use one lector for the Scripture readings. Since singing is still considered an issue under the most recent guidelines, we will continue to use a soloist to sing the first hymn. The congregation, with face coverings, may sing the final hymn led by the service leader. The soloist will still maintain an appropriate distance of approximately 16 feet.

**Sharing of the Peace:** We will continue to share the peace without physical contact or moving about the church by using a reverent bow or offering these or similar words, “The peace of the Lord be with you.”

Offering plates will remain placed at either end of the sanctuary. The baptismal font will remain empty of water.

**Communion:** The procedure for Communion, implemented since reopening, has been successful, so we will not make any significant changes to this procedure for distributing Communion until a later date when updated guidelines are available.

### **Live Streaming of the Church Service:**

The live streaming of church services on YouTube has been an innovation for Saints Peter and Paul. Many thanks to Paul Watkiss and everyone else who has helped bring this about. Live streaming will likely remain a permanent addition to our church services.

**COVID Response Steering Group (June 2021):** John Broussard; Dennis Lauritsen; Jane Lauritsen; Rafael Martinez; Charles Matthies; Linda McShane; Brandon Michaels; Linda Painter, RN; Phil Painter, MD; David Richards and Carrie Watkiss.