

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Updated: 10/22/2020

1. Introduction and Purpose

To ensure a safe and healthy return to worship services at East Ridge High School (ERHS), Christ Redeemer Church (CRC) has developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All church members and others in attendance are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our congregation, and that requires full cooperation among all members and attendees. Only through this cooperative effort, can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our worship gatherings.

Psalm 122:1 ESV

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"

CRC is committed to providing a safe and healthy worship gathering for all of our members and attendees. As we eagerly anticipate celebrating in corporate worship together in person, we look to Hebrews 10 for instruction and encouragement.

Hebrews 10:19-25 ESV

[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have the confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

We are serious about reflecting Christ-like love for all members, especially the most vulnerable, and want to consider the safety and health of all of those gathered together with our church family. Member involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We had three precepts that we had as a guide to our discussions and plan development.

- Love your neighbor as best you can
- Honor God's authority and lesser authorities
- Be faithful to Christ in our plans to reopen

1 Peter 2:16-17 ESV

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

First, please be patient. This is new for everyone. It may take longer to get everyone seated for the service, and it may take longer to have everyone exit the building. Please plan accordingly.

Second, live guilt-free. No one is making physical attendance at a CRC worship service a requirement. In compliance with CDC guidelines, if you are sick, or in higher-risk categories (described below), or if you work with or for people in the higher-risk categories, or if you are not comfortable with a public gathering at this time, you are encouraged to stay home. You are encouraged to do so with a clear conscience. Yes, CRC is gathering for corporate worship, but if you choose to stay home for reasons of health and safety, you ought not to have a guilty conscience before the Lord. We will strive to provide a clean, safe worshipping space. However, we cannot guarantee that you will not get sick. We cannot eliminate the risk of exposure. Use your discretion in your worship attendance decisions.

Our Preparedness Plan follows the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) (MDH) guidelines and federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and addresses:

- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Engineering and administrative controls for physical distancing
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons
- Communications and training that will be provided when and to whom needed

Recent changes to the guidance from the governor are now in effect. Some of the key requirements include:

- Developing and implementing a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan (this document)
- Occupancy in a single, self-contained space is limited to 50% of total capacity, with a maximum of 250 people.
- All persons are strongly encouraged to wear masks (see paragraph below for more details)

The capacity of the auditorium in East Ridge High School (ERHS) is 924. Therefore, our maximum capacity would be 250. Additionally, we will continue to work closely with ERHS to ensure that proper housekeeping such as cleaning, disinfection, and decontamination are effectively covered.

2. Self-Screening

All members and attendees must self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Because our gatherings will happen only once per week initially, we are depending on self-monitoring and we discourage anyone from attending our weekly gathering who is ill whether with COVID-19 symptoms or not. The same is true for those who have recently traveled abroad. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Combination of a fever of a 100F or greater
- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- New loss of smell or taste
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

If you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or who is symptomatic, please do not attend for 14 days following the exposure. In the event that you (or a child with you) begin to manifest illness or symptoms during a worship gathering, please exit the facility immediately. If you are unable to do so, our host team will help you to an isolation room until you can arrange to leave.

3. Masks

All people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all indoor public spaces. The face covering or mask is required to cover the mouth and nose. According to the MDH, the follow exceptions to this rule are:

- Children under age 2 years must not wear face coverings.
- Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings, but are encouraged to wear a face covering if they can.
- People who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.
- Alternatives to masks such as clear face shields may be considered for those with health conditions or situations where wearing a mask is not possible.

4. Contact Tracing

If you test positive for COVID-19 or if you have symptoms for the virus and you attended the church service within two days, we ask that you contact Kathy Schneider, the CRC COVID-19 Preparedness Plan administrator at (651) 238-7565 to assist with contact tracing. Your privacy and personal health information will be protected. We also encourage all members and regular attendees to sign up for the CRC email distribution list to stay informed of potential contacts or changes to this document.

5. Persons of Higher Risk - Compromised Groups

Since COVID-19 affects certain groups more severely than others, we strongly encourage the following groups of people to consider staying home.

- Those with underlying health conditions that compromise their immune system.
- Senior members of our church.
- Those who care for immune-compromised people or seniors.
- Anyone who feels uncomfortable being in a large gathering of people.

6. Signage

CRC will post signs at the entrance and in other visible areas to remind members and guests to not enter if they are ill, have symptoms, or other indicators that fall within the state's guidelines for not being a part of gatherings.

7. Before coming to the worship gathering

We ask that all members and visitors conscientiously perform a self-check and review the self-screen protocols.

- Please wash your hands.
- Please wear a mask: CRC strongly encourages everyone to bring a mask to the service and wear it. There will be a limited number of masks available at the entrance for visitors or those who have forgotten to bring a mask. The expectation is that everyone who can tolerate it will be wearing a mask throughout their time within the building. No need for a mask outside. But please do wear one inside. We recognize the whole issue of wearing masks has become a hot button issue for some, however, at this point, we believe it is a simple way that each of us can show love to others. When you wear or see a mask, think "love" not "fear." Love is our aim. **We are not driven by fear.** A mask is not intended primarily to protect the one wearing it, but to mitigate potential virus transmission to others. If you don't feel comfortable complying with this guideline, then we ask that you please stay home until we are able to lift this expectation. We will continue to livestream the Sunday service for a time, so that those staying home can still participate.

8. Logistics while in the building

Some of the things to consider while you are in the building would be:

- Physical Distancing: Please maintain physical distancing at all times. We will use an alternating seating pattern to keep families from sitting directly behind or in front of another attendee and work to maintain a minimum six-foot distance. We discourage handshakes and encourage other physical distancing greetings.

- Hand Sanitizer: There will be hand sanitizer stations available in the building.
- Bathrooms: Of course, you may use the bathrooms if it should become necessary for you or your children, but please do try to avoid planning on it if possible. Please use discretion and not crowd the restrooms if they must be used.
- Drinking Fountain: The drinking fountain will be turned off.
- Nursery: The nursery will not be available initially. We will update with more information on this as conditions change and we have more time to prepare.
- Children's Devotional: The children's devotional will not be available initially. We will update with more information on this as conditions change.
- Video in the Lobby: We will aim to show video on the TV screens outside the auditorium so that parents with restless children could move into that space if needed. There will be sound for the TVs.
- Nursing Mothers' Room: A nursing mothers' room will not be available initially. We will update with more information on this as conditions change.
- Coffee/Beverages: The coffee station will not be available initially.
- Parents: Please ensure that your children exit the building immediately with you after the service. Please help to ensure that they do not go back into the building after the service and that they do not run amongst those choosing to physically distance outside after the service. Also, encourage them to respect other children's space. Be sensitive that all families are handling this in different ways and be respectful.
- Surfaces: Limit the frequency of touching common surfaces and objects.
- Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze. Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching your face, in particular your mouth, nose, and eyes. Again, facemasks are required.
- Offering: We will provide an offering box near the entrance/exit in place of the ushers passing offering. Hand sanitizer will also be available near the offering box.
- Bulletins: Printed bulletins will not be available. However, the order of service will continue to be sent via email, and available on the church's website.
- Leaving: After the worship service and after whatever time you might need for personal communion with the Lord in your seating space, please plan to exit your seat and move directly to the outside of the building.

9. Communion

When we have the opportunity to celebrate the Lord's Supper, it will look much different from before. CRC leadership will provide more details on serving communion in a separate communication prior to celebrating this ordinance. We will continue to make pre-packaged elements available.

10. Communications and training

This Preparedness Plan will be communicated via email for all members and regular attendees prior to our first meeting together. CRC will provide all necessary training to staff and volunteers.

Church leadership will monitor the implementation of this Preparedness Plan, considering its effectiveness and what might be helpful or needed adjustments along the way as we all gain experience with these measures. We will communicate about any additional information or changes via email and Sunday announcements, as well as on our website.

11. Staff and Volunteers

Staff members and volunteers will adhere to the same guidelines as outlined in this document, along with any updated versions, as much as possible with respect to their given tasks.

12. Summary

Finally, please understand that while we are planning to come together again, the situation could change if circumstances change (spike in COVID-19 cases locally, new governor's proclamation, etc.). The CRC leadership will monitor and evaluate the situation and will keep the church posted on updated information. We thank everyone for your prayers, patience, and understanding in the matter. We are looking forward to meeting in person as the family of God indoors. Again, please be patient with each other and us as we seek to navigate this unusual and transitional season for our church.

13. Administration and Certification

CRC leadership has certified this Preparedness Plan and posted to all members and attendees on October 22, 2020. They will update the plan as necessary.

The **Plan Administrator** for the Christ Redeemer Church COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is Kathy Schneider (651) 238-7565