

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH REOPENING - WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Frequently Asked Questions

Dated: June 25, 2020

1. The State of IL has gone into Phase 4 – what does that mean for Peace? It means we can start to have groups larger than 10 persons return to in-person worship and other functions at our church.

2. When will we return to in-person worship? We are aiming for mid-July. **Who is working on this?** The PPC, working with our COVID and our worship and music teams, are utilizing guidelines from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, the IDPH and CDC as a template for planning for Peace's re-opening. **Is there any possible timeline that you are working on?** The tentative timeline is to have a truncated outdoor service on July 12th and then our first indoor service on July 19th. When we get closer to these dates we will communicate with clear and detailed guidelines for all who gather on how to participate safely. **What can we expect – short term? Long term?** When we first started the virtual services, we learned each week and each week our services got better. The same will be true for returning to in-person worship. The first few services will be different from a normal service. Practicing social distancing, no communion, reduced singing, etc. will make the service much different than in the past. As time passes, and the guidelines change we will make adjustments to the services. Hopefully each week they will also get better.

3. Why haven't we heard anything yet about returning to worship? We have been working on these for some time. We first had to complete the Phase 3 protocols. We discussed these at the congregation meeting on June 7th. We also had to decide when we, as a church, were comfortable re-opening. Each church in our community is proceeding on different timelines. It is an individual church's decision on when it is right for them to return. **What is the process, what is involved?** The first goal is to put together a meaningful service given all of the guidelines and protocols. It is also important to protect the health and safety of our congregation and Pastor. The process is to walk through all of the parts and steps of a worship service and insert the recommended guidelines, like social distancing, wearing masks, communion, collecting the offering, etc. **What are possible scenarios you are considering?** You should understand that we are planning on continuing the virtual services regardless of the in-person services. We understand that many members are still not comfortable coming back into the church right now. Based on capacity guidelines set forth by the state, we are looking at a smaller service. We will ask members to call or email the church by Friday if they are planning on coming. That will give us some idea on the needs and be able to prepare to set up for that Sunday.

4. Why is it taking so long for us to come back? The PPC feels it is important that we balance the "want to" worship in-person with the safety of all of our members, staff and volunteers. We are following the Governor's Restore Illinois Plan to the best of our ability. We are taking into consideration all of the guidelines and how our physical environment fits within

those guidelines. As you all have seen, the guidelines and recommendations have changed based on the day to day results of testing and the number of people infected.

5. What is involved in planning to come back? Re-opening in-person worship will be very different from how we closed down. Closing down in March was a fairly simple and quick process. We stopped having in-person services, we locked down the church and we started our virtual services. Re-opening is a much more complex and slower process. We have many guidelines to follow, we have to take into consideration our members and their health and safety and finally we have to make it work in our facility.

6. How can I be sure it is safe for me to come back to in-person worship? Before the PPC will re-open our church, we will make sure it is as safe as can be given what we know about the virus. We have restored our cleaning services, we have added additional sanitizing procedures, and we are following all of the recommended guidelines. We fully encourage our members to make the best decision for themselves. If you are a member of one of the high-risk groups, please stay home. If you do not feel well, please stay home and call your doctor. If you have any concerns about your health please stay home.

7. What about out-door worship – could we do this now? Which is preferred? We are looking at an outdoor service as our first in-person service in mid-July. An outdoor service in many ways is easier to get up and running while still following all guidelines and requirements for safety. Peace has always enjoyed outdoor services in the past.

We will continue to communicate as we get closer to reopening, so that you can be assured of safety in the expectation of worshipping - together.