

# Zion Lutheran Church

5201 Park Boulevard, Piedmont, CA 94611

510-530-4213

[www.zionlutheran.net](http://www.zionlutheran.net)

*“May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life!”* – Psalm 128:5

## **Guidelines for the Re-opening of Worship at Zion**

**Our first gathering is Sunday, July 5, 2020!**

### **It Begins with You!**

It will be great to be back at Zion! We are thankful for the opportunity to worship in person once again. We are also blessed to continue virtual worship services. In-person worship may not look the same as we remember from pre-COVID days as we follow state, county, synod, and district requirements and guidelines. Yet we will be together rejoicing in Christ’s promises and fulfillment of the Scripture. We joyfully worship regardless of where it takes place – on-line or in-person!

As you read through the following guidelines, we ask three things of everyone.

First, please respect those who have developed the guidelines. The directions included are the result of much prayer, thought, input, and discussion. Each of us has different opinions and approaches and we will not all agree with every guideline.

Second, please know that guidelines and format may change as circumstances change. We are learning together how to live and worship in changed times. We must be flexible as we determine what works for our congregation and still meets requirements. We will continue to closely monitor health regulations and requirements. As we are allowed to do more, we will prayerfully move forward or change our format.

Third, in Christian love for one another, we each bear a responsibility to one another to abide by the guidelines. The love that God has poured into our lives does not insist on its own way nor is it irritable or resentful. Therefore, together we will work to follow the guidance given, not insisting on our own way, realizing we are here to grow in the love of Christ and to share that love with one another.

Every member and visitor should understand the dangerous nature of this contagious disease and take appropriate personal measures to lessen the risk of spreading the virus. This is “agape” love that we so frequently talk about in Christianity. It is sacrificial love that gives up our personal wants, desires and even rights for the sake of others. It not only gives these up but does so willingly and gladly. This is what Paul is speaking about in 1 Corinthians 13, when he says, *“love does not insist on its own way.”* He follows by saying that love is *“not irritable or resentful”* and that *“love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things.”*

So let’s show the world some real Christian agape love and joyfully work together to keep each other safe, enjoy our modified time of worship and fellowship, and rejoice that we are on the road to recovery! In short, a healthy, loving attitude is critical.

We are concerned for those who are at-risk and should not be returning to the sanctuary at this time. Individuals and families have the freedom to decide whether or not to return to in-person worship under the following guidelines or to continue to participate online from home. Each individual or family should make a prayerful decision about whether or not it is appropriate for them to gather for in-person worship. Virtual worship services will continue in their present format. ***Please understand there is no way to entirely eliminate the risk of infection in any public gathering.***

Our concern is also for all who will be present at worship. Loving our neighbor at this time may include doing things uncomfortable to us personally, but which could be a blessing to our neighbor. We realize the particular question of whether or not to wear masks has become controversial, but the state of California and the County of Alameda have been clear that **WE MUST WEAR MASKS**. We also believe wearing masks is an important precaution that provides care for our neighbors. Zion will provide you with a mask if you are not wearing one when you arrive for in-person worship. This will be for you to keep and to bring with you to future services. Thank you to Carolyn Dal Ferro for sewing and donating masks for Zion's use.

The Sanctuary will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each worship service. All materials (hymnals, envelopes, pencils, etc.) have been removed and placed into storage. Restrooms will be available but as single use only. Please avoid the unnecessary touching of surfaces. The drinking fountain will be off limits. The Cry Room will be closed.

We are not allowed to serve food or drinks at this time. This includes coffee. If coffee is part of your Sunday morning worship routine, please make sure to have yours before you come to church or after you leave. Social distancing requirements and the current ban on food and drink mean that the Garden Room will be closed for now.

## **Current Guidelines for Worship**

**(These Will Change as Necessary)**

- 1. If you or anyone in your household** is sick, or if you are at risk of contracting the virus, you are encouraged to stay home and continue to worship with us online. This includes:
  - a. The Elderly (You know who you are).
  - b. People with underlying medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and heart conditions.
  - c. People who have access to those at risk in nursing institutions or assisted living centers.
  - d. People who have recently or who are currently experiencing upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms, and those who live with them.
  - e. People with COVID-19 or who live with someone who has COVID-19.
  - f. People who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- 2. Please enter through the main double doors**, which will be propped open and maintain social distancing of 6 feet as you are waiting to enter. Look for blue tape on the parking lot and floors.
- 3. Stop at the sign-in table.** There will be a slip to sign about your self-health examination. We need to keep these records in order to provide them to the county – if necessary – should someone test positive. Thus, signing in each Sunday is required.
- 4. Next, please proceed to the disinfecting stands** where you will find hand-sanitizer.
- 5. Deposit your Offerings** in the plate in the narthex as you enter the sanctuary.

6. **We have determined we can seat 70 people**, in accordance and keeping with the State and County guidelines of 25% of capacity. You may not be allowed to sit in your “regular” pew or with your regular seatmates. The pews will be taped off to keep you out of certain pews and portions of pews. This is to help maintain 6 feet social distancing.
7. **Pastor and others** involved in leading worship will be wearing masks during worship. This is in accordance with the County guideline that everyone must wear a mask.
8. **Social distancing is to be maintained** at all times. Children need to stay in pews during the Object Lesson. If a child needs to leave the sanctuary to use the restroom, an adult should accompany them.
9. **Windows will be opened** to the extent possible, to encourage airflow. If you get cold easily, please bring a sweater.
10. **When Holy Communion is offered (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)**, you will be directed by the ushers on when to leave the pew. Communion will be served in the narthex at the end of the service. You will hold out your hand to receive a wafer and you will pick up an individual cup of wine from a stand, where the cups will be placed one at a time. Take the cup and when you have finished, please place it in the basket provided for that purpose. After receiving communion, you will exit through the door into the parking lot and immediately continue to your car to depart. Please observe the CDC, State, and County guidelines, that discourage fellowship or social gathering on the premises both before and after the services.
11. **Non-Communion Services** will be dismissed pew-by-pew. Please observe the CDC, State, and County guidelines that discourage fellowship or social gathering on the premises both before and after the services.
12. **Both the 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services will be live streamed every week** using the same format as we have been and available on demand for those who prefer to remain home.
13. **Holy Communion will be offered from 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month for those not attending worship.** This will be conducted outside as a drive-by communion, with everyone remaining in their cars and driving past the communion stations. We will direct traffic flow. This format allows those who do not chose to attend in-person worship services also to receive Holy Communion.
14. **There will be no Kids Church** until further notice. Children remain in worship with their family.
15. **There will be no in-person non-worship events** at Zion until further notice, including Sunday School, Game Night, Movie Night, etc. All Zoom meetings and online events will still take place virtually, including Wednesday morning Bible Study.

### **Note: Our Plans are Subject to Change!**

As you are well aware, the situation in which we find ourselves continues to develop and even the best plans are subject to changes. We will monitor and abide by our state, county, synod, and district requirements and guidelines. We will do our best to alert you to any changes as they may develop.

## What Will the Worship Service Itself Look Like?

Since the vast majority of clinical studies suggest that the primary form of transmission of the coronavirus is through the air, we will do everything possible to limit this sort of transmission.

### This means that we will:

- **Limit the length of the service.** Services will be modified to be approximately 30 minutes.
- **We will not be singing.** An introduction and two verses of the hymns will be played differently each verse, with variety that is difficult to use when leading singing. Text will be on the screens to ponder during the playing.
- **We will limit congregational verbal responses.**
- **There will not be a printed bulletin or announcements.** All of the liturgy, readings and hymns will be shown on the screens.
- **Offering plates will not be passed.** Offerings will be placed in the plates as you enter or exit. Offerings may also be made securely online via the Zion website or the Zion app. We encourage you to sign up for electronic giving if you haven't yet.

By implementing these measures during the service, we will meet the State and County's goal of limiting the time that people are together, limiting the amount of speaking that could introduce airborne particles, limiting movement that could stir up airborne pathogens and reducing the number of surfaces that are touched by individuals.

Following the service(s), the sanctuary and restrooms will receive a deep cleaning.

## Pastor, I'm Just Concerned. May I wait longer before I return?

Yes, absolutely you may wait. We do not want anyone to feel pressured to return to Zion until you feel ready and comfortable doing so. Our elderly and many others with underlying medical conditions or who care for those with such conditions are certainly the most vulnerable. Therefore, we will continue to publish a video version of the worship service each week so you may stay home if you choose. It is available by going to our website at [www.zionlutheran.net](http://www.zionlutheran.net) or on Facebook.

## How Can I Help? What Needs To Be Done?

First and foremost, PRAY that God will bless us and protect us. Second, remember that it begins with you, and an attitude of gratitude will go a long way in helping us out. We will need volunteers to:

1. Greet people (in a socially distanced way), and ensure they sign in.
2. Oversee the disinfecting table.
3. Monitor the restrooms, allowing only one person or family unit in at a time.
4. Help clean and sterilize after each worship service.

Jesus said, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35) **May this be our guide as together we seek to proclaim and practice the love of Christ.** *"May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life!"*