

**Immanuel Lutheran Church ELCA
COVID-19 Precautions for Small Group Meetings**

Description:

Small groups with regular attendees meet to carry out various activities and projects, such as study and discussion, knitting, sewing projects, etc. Designated dates and times are published in the Image newsletter and E-blast updates.

In keeping with the teachings of the church and the philosophy of the Immanuel Council and congregation, ***all are invited and welcome to participate***. Accommodations are made wherever possible to include persons with special needs, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Groups take all thoughtful infection control precautions to enable attendance by all who are comfortable that their COVID-19 risk level is accommodated, regardless of vaccination status. Still, there is no guarantee of safety from COVID-19 on the premises.

The following guidance is offered as minimal expectations for caring for one another in small group meetings at Immanuel.

Organizers

- Contact the church office to reserve the meeting date, time, and location on the church calendar and to complete the COVID Team Service Request form.
- Church office contacts Immanuel's COVID-19 Team Chair to offer help with the COVID precautions needed:
Karen Betzig-Lundberg
715.579.9892
betziglundberg@charter.net
- Keep records of date, attendees and their contact information, should health department contact tracing be needed (see attached form). Turn in attendance form to the church office.
- Whenever possible, livestream the meeting via Zoom for all who are unable to attend in person. Zoom links will be given only to individuals upon request, not published in the Image or e-news.

Supplies/Equipment

- 6-foot spaced seating for attendees
- Masks
- Hand Sanitizer
- Sanitizer Wipes
- Tissues
- If needed, separate microphones for each speaker, or cleaned with sanitizer wipes between speakers

Attendance

- COVID Team is available at the group leader's request to help with spacing considerations, ventilation issues, etc. Outdoor meeting is preferred, weather-permitting.
- Leaders are asked to remind members to stay home if experiencing symptoms or in quarantine.
- Meeting may be cancelled should public health recommendations change.

Set-up

- Check-in table with screening questions (see attached), masks for those who arrive without them, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, tissues, and containers for clean and used pens.
- Refreshments, if offered, must be individually packaged (i.e., granola bars; zip-lock baggies of fruit, vegetables, trail mix, cookies, individual cupcakes etc.), pre-poured cups of beverages or individually bottled/canned beverages served with spacing to allow for pick-up without touching others. No shared food or beverage containers. Alternatively, attendees may be asked to bring their own snacks and beverages.

Masks

- A positive message of care for neighbor will be expressed to encourage wearing masks.
- Current CDC recommendations and Eau Claire County mandates require masks be worn when indoors in public. Masks may be removed when eating and drinking.
- Masks will be provided for those who do not have their own mask.

Meeting Access

- Meeting may be live-streamed via Zoom to accommodate persons who prefer not to meet in-person. The opportunity will be published with instructions about how to obtain the link.
- Zoom links will be given only to individuals upon request, not published in newsletter or e-news.

Cleaning Procedures

- Arrangements will be made for sanitizing tables, chairs, bathrooms and any other high-touch surfaces following the meeting before the space is used again by another group – to be completed by custodial staff if available or volunteers.

These guidelines may be changed based on the most up to date recommended protocols from state and local health officials, as well as input from volunteers.

In case of issues or questions, contact the church office at 715-832-7832.

Attachments:

- “Small Group Attendance Form”
- “Screening Questions for Meeting Attendees”

Resources:

- WI Dept of Health Services; <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- Eau Claire City-County Health Department; <https://coronavirus-and-covid-19-information-hub-ecounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/e86da215a6814355b45695a0af7a71e8>
- CDC “Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers (Information for Event Planners and Individuals).” 1/5/21
- CDC, “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- CDC Faith-based, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>
- Wisconsin Council of Churches, “Returning to Church 2.0”, 1/14/21

04/23/21