

# Redeemer Staged Return Plan

The Redeemer Church Council appointed a task force to develop a plan for a staged return to in-person worship. The task force read resource materials provided by the ELCA, our insurance company and other documents, and over a number of meetings developed the following plan for returning to in-person worship. The plan will function as a tool to guide our move toward gathering in the way we have been used to. Aware that we have a significant population of older adults, the intent is to move carefully, in stages. The council also realizes that it could become necessary to move back down stages should the number of positive cases surge.

The council also plans to review the data bi-monthly, at their regular meeting and on a date between meetings to assess whether we would advance to the next stage. Following the most recent assessment, the council has determined to hold where we are (Level-1, Orange). They will assess again on their July 16 meeting to consider advancing to the next stage on July 26. At the point that we move forward, a letter will be sent to the congregation with more detailed direction.

Any member of the council would be happy to answer questions that you have. We also ask for your continued prayers that we may be faithful always to God's intention for our community.

# Redeemer Lutheran Church

## In-Person Gathering Action Steps and Staging Criteria

**Goal:** To guide Redeemer Lutheran Church through careful stages to move toward in-person worship, fellowship and other gatherings. **Note: The following plan may be used to move to a lower level in the event of increase of cases or trajectory or if the Office of the Bishop, Iowa Department of Public Health or the Governor's office direct restrictions of public gatherings**

COMING BACK TOGETHER LEVELS	
<b>LEVEL 0 - Very limited access to the building</b> <i>(We have not yet been at this restrictive a stage.)</i>	
Actions	Advancement Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Worship:</b> Services will be provided by a livestream and/or video-recording available on the church YouTube channel. No in-person services are permitted.</li> <li>✓ <b>Special Services:</b> Services will not be able to be held.</li> <li>✓ <b>Connection/Fellowship:</b> In-person church fellowship activities will not be held.</li> <li>✓ <b>Meetings:</b> In-person group meetings are not allowed. All meetings will be held virtually through telephone, video conference or audio conference options. (e.g., Zoom meetings)</li> </ul>	<p>A clear downward trajectory in the number of positive cases and the rate of positive tests in the surrounding geographical area, for 2 consecutive weeks, and/or direction from the Office of the Bishop, and/or general opening of churches in Indianola must occur prior to moving to Level 1. (Orange)</p>
<b>LEVEL 1 (10 or fewer people)</b>	
Actions	Advancement Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Safety Requirements:</b> Facial coverings (masks) and physical distancing are required when in the building. Hand hygiene will be encouraged.</li> <li>✓ <b>Worship:</b> Services are provided by livestream and/or video-recording available on the church YouTube channel. Ten or fewer people are able to be present. Participants <b>not</b> leading worship or music are required to adhere to the safety requirements.</li> <li>✓ <b>Special Services:</b> Funeral/memorial, wedding or small gatherings will require ten or fewer people present. Participants not officiating are required to adhere to safety requirements.</li> <li>✓ <b>Connection/Fellowship:</b> Church fellowship activities / gatherings will not be held in-person during this time.</li> <li>✓ <b>Meetings:</b> Small group meetings preferred to be held virtually through telephone, audio/video conference options. (e.g., Zoom meetings). In-person meetings will require masks and physical distancing with less than 10 people (could be held outside).</li> </ul>	<p>A further downward trajectory in the number of positive cases and the rate of positive tests in the surrounding geographical area, for 2 consecutive weeks, and/or direction from the Office of the Bishop, and/or general expanded re-opening of churches in Indianola must occur prior to moving to Level 2. (Yellow)</p>

LEVEL 2 (40 or fewer people-Saturday night)	
Actions	Advancement Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Worship services will be available for in-person participation on Saturday night. It will be a reflective, contemplative worship experience without communion, no singing and limited congregational responses. The total number permitted would be no more than 40 (Including worship leaders and AV technicians). Participants will need to sign up in advance. Those not leading worship or music are required to wear masks, and physical distancing will be required. Only specific pews will be available for seating. (This could include a similarly-sized gathering for a funeral, memorial service or wedding. Such events scheduled for Saturday would need to be held at least four hours before worship.)</li> <li>✓ Worship will be continue to be provided by a livestream on Sunday with ten or fewer people present. Those not leading worship or music are required to wear masks.</li> <li>✓ If necessary, a baptism could be held outside, with masks, careful sanitation of hands on the part of the presider and representation from the congregation</li> <li>✓ The order of service would be available on the screen, or as a PDF for people to access on their own digital device. (No hymnals would be available.)</li> <li>✓ Facial coverings (masks) and physical distancing are required for people coming to the building.</li> <li>✓ Limited outdoor or indoor activities may resume but with physical distancing requirements and/or masks.</li> </ul>	<p>A further downward trajectory in the number of positive cases and the rate of positive tests in the surrounding geographical area, for 2 consecutive weeks, and/or direction from the Office of the Bishop, and/or further re-opening of churches in Indianola before moving to Level 3. (Green)</p>

LEVEL 3 (80 Saturday, 40 Sunday)	
Actions	Advancement Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Safety Requirements:</b> Facial coverings (masks) are optional but remain highly recommended, especially for indoor gatherings. Hand hygiene and physical distancing will be highly recommended. Participants attending worship will need to sign-up/register to attend in-person worship. Hymnals will not be available and all worship service documents will be available digitally (screen, PDF for access on own mobile device). Designated pews may require sanitization between services dependent upon length of time between services.</li> <li>✓ <b>In-person Worship:</b> In-person worship services will be available only on Saturday night with 80 or fewer present and Sunday morning with 40 or fewer present (including worship leaders, AV technicians and musicians). It will be a reflective, contemplative worship experience. There will be no singing and limited congregational responses. Pre-filled, individual communion kits will be available for worship.</li> </ul>	<p>Widespread access to vaccine, and/or formal approval from the ELCA, and/or the state and/or the CDC to move to level 4. (No color.)</p>

- ✓ **Online/In-Person Worship:** Worship on Sunday will continue to be provided by a livestream but will allow up to 40 in-person worship participants. Those not leading worship or music are required to wear masks. Music leaders will sing, but the congregation will not sing. Pre-packaged, pre-filled, individual communion kits will be available for worship.
- ✓ **In-Person Special Services:** Funeral/memorial, wedding or other small group gatherings will require eighty or fewer people present and adhere to the in-person worship guidelines (above). Events scheduled on Saturday would need to be held at least a minimum of four hours prior to worship to adhere to safety and cleaning guidelines. Participants not officiating will be required to use facial coverings (masks) and physical distancing measures by participants. If necessary, a baptism may be held with masked participants, and care taken to sanitize hands on the part of the presider before the dipping of water.
- ✓ **Children's Christian Education:** Young children education offerings will be determined based upon school district plans.
- ✓ **Community/Fellowship:** Fellowship activities and Christian Education for adults or older children could resume but be limited by needed restrictions such as appropriate physical distance.
- ✓ **Meetings:** Small group meetings may resume but limited by physical distancing. Consider options for virtual connection through telephone, audio/video conference conference options. (e.g., Zoom meetings).

**LEVEL 4**

**Actions**

- ✓ No restrictions
- ✓ Return to activities as they were in January 2020.