Living Hope Community Church

Covid Protocol

Living Hope Community Church has a phased opening plan to keep our attenders safe. To read through the phases you can find them attached below. Our Current safety protocols are as follows:

-In person worship service, must wear mask when entering and leaving may remove when seated

-Wear mask while singing

-Pews are taped off and spaced

-Children’s Church 1st and 3rd Sundays, Children must wear masks

-Youth group 1st and 3rd Sundays, 7 pm in person, must wear mask

-Sunday School in person, socially distanced

-No fellowship or greeting time

-Giving online, via mail or drop in plate while entering sanctuary

-Hands of God closed for at least 2 weeks starting 11/7 to allow numbers of COVID cases to go down, will open by appointment.

-Church office open by appointment only

-Men’s group in person, socially distanced 1st and 3rd Wednesday of month 7 p.m. And via zoom 2nd and 4th Wednesday 7pm

-Women’s group in person, socially distanced 2nd and 4th Monday 6:30 pm

Main Plan

In accordance with local, state and national guidelines, Living Hope Community Church will begin to re-open our public gatherings for worship in a three-phased approach. All of our efforts to do so will be balanced between the desire and need to participate in corporate worship and respect for the health and welfare of all of our congregants. This approach will be subject to the guidelines set forth by the Michigan State Governors Office and Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services. The initiation of each phase will be determined by data and information provided by our governmental health authorities. Most importantly, this three-phased approach will adhere to the following theological principles set forth by God’s Word:

1. Loving Our God and Our Neighbors – We will do our best to provide worship services in a safe manner, within reason, in accordance with the Lord’s call to “Love your neighbor as yourself” in Mark 12:31, John 13:34-35, and Romans 12:10.
2. A Commitment to Meeting Together – In line with our mission of “Bringing people into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ”, we will remain committed to spurring one another on towards Christ, in whatever form that takes. We will not neglect our meeting together as set forth in Acts 2:42 and Hebrews 10:25.
3. Protection of the Vulnerable – While we believe in the importance of every individual taking ownership of their own health, we also recognize the need to do all we can to care for the vulnerable in our midst, as in Galatians 6:2, *“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”.*

In all that we do, we echo the prayer of 3 John 1:2…

***“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”***

LHCC RETURN TO CHURCH PLAN

Phase 1 – Restricted Operations

Phase 1 Operations allows for the lightening of restrictions towards gatherings and will allow for limited numbers of people to gather together. This is the milestone that will allow for limited Sunday worship services and small group gatherings. Originally, the governor’s executive order banned all gatherings greater than 50 people, but churches are exempt from penalties related to this order. Regardless, we believe it’s prudent to limit occupancy for all gatherings in Phase 1 to maintain social distancing between household groups. Some limitations may be adjusted if warranted as we near Phase 2.

* Church Services IN PERSON AND ON-LINE
* Narthex SOCIAL TIME (cookies & coffee) SUSPENDED
* Seating ASSIGNED BY USHERS & ROWS DISMISSED AT END OF SERVICE
* Greeting time SUSPENDED
* Offering DROP-IN COLLECTION OR ONLINE ONLY
* Music RECORDED/LISTEN ONLY
* Nursery SUSPENDED
* Children’s church SUSPENDED
* Sunday School ON-LINE (Zoom meetings)
* Masks GOVERNOR’S ORDER-

*(WEAR MASK WHEN ENTERING, IF COMFORTABLE YOU MAY REMOVE ONCE SEATED)*

* Church office CLOSED
* Building NARTHEX, SANCTUARY & BATHROOM *(other areas restricted)*
* Other activities SUSPENDED

Other considerations under Phase 1

* As always, if you or your family members are sick PLEASE STAY AT HOME
* If your health is compromised or if being in a group of people makes you uncomfortable, please stay at home
* No hand-shaking or hugging at this time - please maintain a social distance of at least 6 ft.
* Church entrance through front doors only – please use hand sanitizer in Narthex.
* Ushers will seat congregants & dismiss rows at end of service
* Bulletins will not be distributed – announcements will be projected on the screen.
* Church bathrooms are open, but limited to two people at a time. Trashcans will be located outside of door, use paper towel to open door.
* Extra sanitation measures on “touch” surfaces (door handles, church pews, bathrooms, etc.)
* Hands of God and other mission related activities are suspended and will be evaluated separately for a phased resumption of operations.

We realize that this is going to be much different than our normal church worship experience, but we’re trying to make returning to church as safe and comfortable to as many of our church members as possible!

**LHCC RETURN TO CHURCH PLAN**

**Phase 2 – Limited Operations**

Phase 2 operations allow church activities to resume to some measure of normalcy, while maintaining certain protective measures for the congregation. Fortunately, our church sanctuary is designed for approximately 425 people allowing us to spread out and maintain social distance between family groups for worship services or congregational events/meetings. The transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 will be dictated by recommendations from governmental health organizations with input from our congregation. We need to do this prayerfully and carefully. Some limitations may be adjusted if warranted as we near Phase 3.

* Church Services IN PERSON AND ON-LINE
* Narthex SOCIAL TIME REINSTATED (with limitations)
* Seating SPREAD OUT (to maintain social distance)
* Greeting time TBA
* Offering DROP-IN COLLECTION or ONLINE ONLY
* Music RESUMES
* Nursery REINSTATED (with limitations)
* Children’s church REINSTATED (with limitations)
* Sunday school REINSTATED (with limitations)
* Masks TBD
* Church office OPEN (by appointment only)
* Building UNUSED AREAS RESTRICTED
* Other activities REINSTATED (as reasonable and allowable)

Other considerations under Phase 2

* As always, if you or your family members are sick, please stay at home.
* If your health is compromised or if being in a group of people makes you uncomfortable, please stay at home.
* No hand-shaking or hugging at this time – please maintain appropriate social distance.
* Every other pew row in sanctuary will be cordoned off to help maintain social distance. Congregants will seat themselves (try to allow for at least 10 ft. between groups).
* Bulletins will be available for pick-up in the Narthex.
* Participants in nursery, children’s church and Sunday school classes will be limited by space size.
* Potlucks and other food related events are suspended in Phase 2. Other activities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
* Church meetings (leadership and otherwise) may be held on-line or in-person, provided that appropriate social distancing is available (i.e. in the sanctuary or fellowship hall)
* Extra sanitation measures on “touch” surfaces (door handles, church pews, bathrooms, etc.)
* Hands of God and other mission related activities may resume after careful consideration of protective measures.

**LHCC RETURN TO CHURCH PLAN**

**Phase 3 – Unrestricted Operations**

Unfortunately, we don’t know when unrestricted operations will happen. What we do know is that God is still on His throne and in charge, and we will prayerfully approach Phase 3 and how it’s implemented. Phase 3 operation is the re-opening of Living Hope Community Church to unrestricted use as before the pandemic. However, please be mindful that some aspects of the building use in general and our worship experience in particular may never be quite the same. So please keep in mind that some aspects of LHCC operations may be adjusted if warranted as we approach Phase 3.

* Church Services IN PERSON AND ON-LINE
* Narthex SOCIAL TIME REINSTATED (with snacks and coffee)
* Seating AS AVAILABLE
* Greeting time REINSTATED (with awareness about touching and personal space)
* Offering DROP-IN COLLECTION ONLY
* Music BY PRAISE TEAM (with congregation singing)
* Nursery REINSTATED (with no limitations)
* Children’s church REINSTATED (with no limitations)
* Sunday school REINSTATED (with no limitations)
* Masks PERSONAL CHOICE
* Church office OPEN
* Building UNRESTRICTED USE
* Other activities REINSTATED (as reasonable and allowable)

Throughout this process if you have concerns or insight we welcome you to discuss any with Pastor Todd. Remember that WE are the church and that collectively we represent the body of Christ on earth! Also, please keep in mind that the unchurched in our community are watching us more closely than ever and that God has given us an opportunity to **shine our light**!