



Updated Apr. 29, 2021

Greetings LCC Members and Friends!

Stewarding local ministry through the “5 Stages of Reopening IL” requires wisdom, knowledge, and prayer. When wisdom falters we always have prayer! Our LCC Council & Leadership Team has prayed, listened, discerned, evaluated many outside resources, and constructed a basic framework / philosophy which outlines how we will continue to physically gather. We call it the “Continuing A Loving Ministry” (CALM) framework. CALM seeks to be faithful, cautious, disciplined, and loving to our *whole* community, while ensuring that LCC ministry remains vibrant and fully accessible. Your input has been essential, so please continue to share your own discernment with us at leadership@libcov.org.

At the core, we have tried to be good stewards of your trust in us - prayerfully discerning what is “ministry essential” vs. “inconvenient”. We have also been mindful of the substantial number of LCC members and friends that carry heightened risks associated with infection. We have considered the increasing number of those vaccinated in our region as well as our LCC community. We have communicated through email and our website as this plan has changed based on changing data, state guidance, and best practices. We will continue to closely monitoring all data, state guidance and best practice - updating and communicating the CALM framework regularly as we move forward - together!

Core Commitment

One of our Core Values at LCC is **Community**. We recognize that some will (rightfully) not physically gather even when fully permitted by the State. Our core commitment has been - and will continue - that we encourage and affirm each other’s personal discernment and yet **will not lose connection with each other in full community**. To that end, even when physical participation is fully permitted, we will continue to offer a virtual / hybrid model of all worship and ministry activity that lends itself to being streamed online. We anticipate this “hybrid” access / commitment to be the norm moving forward as long as it is needed and tenable. This commitment also allows us to retain access to more distant friends who have been able to reconnect with LCC - a wonderful surprise during this difficult time. We will also further invite the creativity of all ministry teams in developing additional virtual ministry connections for those who feel it best to remain home.

CDC Recommendations to Avoid and Avoid Spreading COVID-19

Living in community means living with the common good in mind. This means practicing all safety guidelines recommended by the CDC and IDPH. At LCC, we will practice these at all times. They have been presented as “The 3 W’s”:

WEAR YOUR MASK: an appropriate mask covering your nose and mouth at all times is our practice for gathering at LCC.

WASH YOUR HANDS: as often as is practical, wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds under hot water.

WATCH YOUR DISTANCE: a distance of more than 6 feet should be maintained between all individuals at all times.

Response Plan for Potential Exposure

If a positive case related to LCC is reported, or a true “Exposure” is identified (as defined by the CDC), LCC will adhere strictly to CDC updated guidance and policies.

In many instances, even as area activity rises, an LCC case may be reported that requires no further action. The Leader Team will be apprised of the reporting (maintaining confidentiality unless permitted by the member to share information more broadly) and will work with LCC staff to direct the affected member to CDC protocols and their personal physician.

We will also discern whether any true “exposure” to others occurred, again based on CDC guidelines and definitions. If so, we will be in communication with those who may have been affected, and again direct members to all CDC recommended protocols as outlined below and encouraging direct follow up with personal physicians.

The Leader Team will also report to the congregation any cases and exposures that specifically relate to LCC, and will make a determination of any required changes in ministry format based upon state Phase guidance and the prevalence of incidents at LCC.

If someone begins to experience symptoms while in our building, they will be immediately escorted to our designated Quarantine space until they can drive or arrange for transportation home. This area will then be thoroughly disinfected and any exposed parties notified.

CDC Recommendations for Persons with COVID-19:

Anyone experiencing COVID symptoms should report to their personal physician and follow their guidance. If diagnosed with COVID, the following procedure will be used at LCC.

Accumulating evidence supports ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using a symptom-based strategy. Specifically, researchers have reported that people with mild to moderate COVID-19 remain infectious no longer than 10 days after their symptoms began, and those with more severe illness or those who are severely immunocompromised remain infectious no longer than 20 days after their symptoms began. Therefore, CDC has updated the recommendations for discontinuing home isolation as follows:

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

At least 10 days* have passed since symptom onset and

At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and

Other symptoms have improved.

*A limited number of persons with severe illness may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days, that may warrant extending duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset. Consider consultation with infection control experts.

Persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 who never develop COVID-19 symptoms may discontinue isolation and other precautions 10 days after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA.

Expansion of In-Person Worship and Ministry

With vaccinations on the rise, our numbers trending in the right direction again, and the option for outdoor and virtual worship available to everyone, we have decided that as of Sunday, May 2, we will open up our church to groups of up to 100, and allow fully and appropriately masked singing in our worship services. This allows all small groups, bible studies, Team meetings, youth groups, and children's ministry groups to gather in a hybrid form according to the safety guidelines of this document (see the **Core Commitments** section for a discussion of our continuing hybrid offerings of all ministries). We encourage all groups to meet in the largest rooms possible or outside when weather permits.

For Sunday morning worship, 100 worshipers will be welcomed to our sanctuary. They will be greeted at the door by our Ushers who will check temperatures, welcome newcomers, answer questions, and direct everyone to a table with a "symptom check" form for each family to sign. A table at the entrance to the sanctuary will have bulletins, journals, communion supplies, and other materials needed for worship. Seating will be limited to every other row and family groupings will need to be more than 6 feet away from other groups.

During worship, we welcome worshipers to sing and speak as part of worship, though we still request that people refrain from passing items, handshakes and hugs.

After worship, we will not have our traditional Coffee Hour and ask that worshipers do not congregate in the narthex after the service due to room size constraints. All are welcome to gather anywhere outdoors on the church grounds to connect after worship.

Phase 5 Implications when appropriate

Phase 5, defined by "widespread vaccine distribution, a treatment option that ensures health care capacity is no longer a concern, or there are no new cases over a sustained period", will bring a full opening of LCC ministries with recommended careful behavior. Stay tuned for details as Phase 5 approaches.

In It Together

Friends, we are Covenant people, and therefore we are "In It Together". As leaders and shepherds of the flock our task is to protect, feed, and care for the *whole* church. Continue to be in prayer - for us, our congregation, our local / global ministry partners, and for each other as we journey together during this remarkable time. We give thanks to God for you, and we trust you will find this framework helpful.