

## **FAQs – Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church In-Person Worship**

### ***Why do I need to register for Worship?***

First, we need to know how many people to expect each Sunday morning so we can prepare for required spacing and social distancing. Second, registering makes it possible to inform you in the event you were exposed to Covid-19 at worship.

### ***Why do you need names and phone numbers?***

In brief, so you can be informed if you've been exposed here at Gustavus and so the Minnesota Department of Health can complete their case investigation. If someone who attended worship tests positive for Covid-19, Gustavus will share with the Department of Health the names of the others who attended that worship.

Here's how case investigation and contact tracing work: "Case investigation identifies where people who have COVID-19 may have been exposed or infected others. Case investigations also help to identify contacts, or people who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Contact tracing helps to further slow the spread of the virus by talking to contacts about how to stay home and away from others." (*Minnesota Department of Health*)

### ***What happens if someone at the service I attended has Covid-19? Would I be notified?***

Yes. In the event Gustavus is notified that someone who has been here has COVID-19, and you were here at the same time, we will notify you. The Department of Health will also evaluate the situation and may contact you.

By the same token, we ask you to inform Gustavus if you or someone in your household tests positive after being at worship, so we can inform others in the congregation who may be affected, and the health department.

This is why it's so important to register your attendance with Gustavus and to provide your contact information. Scientists and health authorities have found that Covid-19 is often spread asymptotically: people pass it along without even realizing they are sick.

### ***I'm vaccinated. Why do I need to wear a mask when the CDC says I am now safe?***

We are making decisions based on keeping you safe as well as your neighbor, and that is why we require you to wear a mask that tightly covers your mouth and nose, even if you have been fully vaccinated. The combination of being

socially distant and wearing proper face coverings keeps all of us as safe as possible. Please note: a plastic face shield is not an acceptable substitute for a face mask.

Not everyone is vaccinated; some people are at higher risk due to pre-existing health issues; no vaccine is 100%. We must think of others, first.

***Why has GA been so slow to open, when other churches have been holding in-person worship services, with communion and singing, for months?***

As the pandemic began, everyone had to make decisions on how to keep ourselves, others and the broader community safe. Knowing these would be important decisions, the staff invited the congregation to join the Re-Opening Task Force last spring – to monitor the ever-evolving global pandemic and the best choices for Gustavus Adolphus and our congregation. Through countless conversations and meetings, the task force, Congregation Council and staff were unanimous that waiting until late May, 2021 to hold in-person worship services was going to be best for our congregation.

***When will be we able to attend without masks? Take communion together?***

The short answer is, we are not sure. We have and will continue to follow the lead of our state and national health authorities, and rely on their guidance to inform our decisions. For now, our goal is to provide a safe opportunity for in-person worship for those who are comfortable with that. When the time comes to relax restrictions, we will communicate that.