



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

COVID-19: Congregational Survey

Overview

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has provided a template you can use to “check your congregation’s pulse or temperature” during the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey has three parts, and is designed to help you:

Part 1. Assess how members of your congregation are doing right now (this is an opportunity to learn who needs a phone call and which of the congregation’s online resources they’ve been using).

Part 2. Discern their readiness to return to in-person gatherings (if you are currently gathering as you did before the pandemic, this section may not apply to you; if you are currently not gathering in person, this section may help you understand the conditions under which you are likely to see people feeling comfortable enough to return, and to what extent they would be comfortable participating).

Part 3. Demographics section so you know (in terms of their length of tenure with the congregation and in terms of their age) who is and isn’t responding to the survey, and so that you can compare categories on how they feel about some of the questions (for example, are people of a certain age category more likely to wish to return to worship sooner than other age categories? If so, that could influence how your first few Sundays back in in-person worship would look and feel).

Feel free to remove any parts of this survey, or any questions, or any of the response options that do not apply or that your congregation would not consider. This is only a guide, designed to help you get started. Note that instructions within the survey itself are in italics; don’t include them in the survey.

How-To

This survey is designed to be sent via email and completed online using a software such as Survey Monkey or Google Forms. For those without access to email, you could also ask them to phone in their answers, and have volunteers take the calls and write down their responses. Those can be manually entered later by whoever has the SurveyMonkey or Google Forms account.

It is recommended to send out a letter or email with the church logo a few days before you send out the survey via email. Let people know it’s coming and why you’re conducting a survey,

so they will be more likely to respond. If you have regular participants but don't know their emails, this is an opportunity to encourage them to give you their email addresses.

Create survey online (using Google Forms, Survey Monkey, or another service) and send it out to your mailing list. Keep track of who has and hasn't responded, and after a week, send out a reminder to those who haven't responded yet. Consider repeating this survey every month or two, as needed.

SurveyMonkey

SurveyMonkey is an online survey tool that lets you create surveys and automatically organizes data. This allows you to get instant feedback, without having to manually count the responses or enter the responses into a spreadsheet. With a Basic (free) plan, you can create and send a survey with up to 10 questions or elements (including question types, descriptive text, or images), so you would need to remove some questions to use it. The free plan only allows you to review up to 40 responses, and doesn't allow you to export the data, but it does create a report. The Standard Survey Monkey plan only costs about \$40 per month, and you can go month to month. It could be worth it to take advantage of the extra features (having a longer survey, being able to export the data, and being able to view up to 1000 responses per month). Learn More: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/pricing/individual/details/>

Set up your survey using the Design Survey mode, then use the Preview mode to test it out, look for typos, and make sure everything works. When you think it's ready to send, go to Collect Responses. There you will have a choice of how to send out your survey:

1. Web link: this option creates a link to the survey that you can embed in:

- an email that you send out yourself
- your congregation's website
- an e-newsletter
- Facebook or other social media
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An advantage of using the weblink is that everyone can freely share it by texting it or forwarding the email. You can reach more people by displaying the link in newsletters, on your website, on your Facebook page, and emailing people. You can also use the email format that people are used to seeing, with your customized signature, church logo, and so forth. A disadvantage of using the weblink is that it's a lot of work to keep track of who has taken the survey and who has not, and to send reminders to those who have not taken it. The ELCA would recommend this method for those who are inexperienced with using online surveys.

2. Email (automated): this option allows you to input the email addresses, schedule a date and time to send them out, and schedule a date and time for SurveyMonkey to send out reminders. It will only send reminders to those who have not already responded. SurveyMonkey tracks participation by the email address. However, this can create problems if more than one person share the same email address; only one person per email address can take the survey. And, if

they forward the email to someone else, the link won't work, as it's unique to the original email address to which it was first sent. Also, while you can write your own email, it's hard to customize it with your church's logo or a custom signature (unless you know HTML).

For questions about how to set up your survey in SurveyMonkey, email research@elca.org

Google Forms

Google Forms is a form software that can be used to create surveys. It requires a Google account, but is otherwise free. It does take a little more work to create and organize the data than SurveyMonkey, but it is pretty straightforward. There are no restrictions on the number of questions or responses. Google Forms will organize the survey responses to an extent and will also give you the option to create a spreadsheet with all of the responses. Learn More:

<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>

Create your survey using the Create New Form Option. Add your questions and use the preview to see what the form will look like and if there are any typos. When it's ready to send, click the Send button. This will show you the options on how to send the survey: Email, Link, and Embed

1. Email: This option lets you type in specific email addresses and then send the survey directly to those email addresses.
2. Link: This option creates a link to the survey, which you can then include in a letter or email from the congregation, post on Facebook or your website, or send via text message. This option is recommended.
3. Embed: This option lets you embed the form directly into your website. In this case, you would distribute the survey by sharing the link to your website.

For questions on setting up your survey using Google Forms, email communications@mittensynod.org

Sending Survey via Link

1. Email link to all members and regular visitors. Also, post the link in e-newsletters, on social media, and on the congregation's website. Expect to get about 95% of the responses within the first 48 hours. After that, they will just trickle in.
2. After about a week, compare responses to list of all members/regular visitors to create a list of those who have not completed the survey online.
3. Send a reminder email to all who have not participated.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 about a week later to send out a second, and final, reminder email.
5. If you want to be sure to hear from everyone, you can call all members/regular visitors who have not completed the survey online. Divide up the list of those you have not heard from and assign specific ministry team members to call specific individuals/family groups on the list within the next week. If unable to reach the member, call up to three times. Have printed blank

paper forms of the survey so the caller can mark in responses. Email, call, or mail responses to survey analyzer to include in the tabulation.

6. Tabulate responses. Share de-identified responses with pastor, council, and congregation. Share names and numbers of those requesting a call with pastor and spiritual support care team.

Survey Questions

Survey Introduction

(this could go on social media, on your website, or in an email; feel free to customize it. This introduction is just a suggestion to get you started. Thanks go to Holy Cross Lutheran in Libertyville, IL for sharing this with us! We also highly encourage you to add the ELCA logo or your own congregation's custom logo to the survey's title page.

We understand that there are different levels of comfort and risk. These are unusual times and they present their own unique challenges. We value the science and the guidance from health experts who offer their wisdom in such matters. We understand that the pandemic impacts different geographical regions differently and that we rely on health organizations like our state and local public health departments to provide current assessments and trends.

[INSERT YOUR CHURCH'S NAME HERE](#) leadership is continuously processing information with the primary goal of being as thoughtful and attentive to the health needs of everyone while managing the desire to be together in person as a community of faith. The message continues to be that [INSERT YOUR CHURCH'S NAME HERE](#) is not closed. Ministry is happening in meaningful and different expressions.

We appreciate your input with this survey. Although we may not be able to meet everyone's desires for in-person worship, we are listening to everyone. We continue to pray for carefully crafted decisions that respect the uniqueness of each of our situations while balancing our personal needs with our desire to be stewards of the common good and the practice of loving one another.

Survey Part I

1. You are welcome to either submit one response for an entire family group or couple OR have each person fill out their own survey. If you are responding as a couple or family group, please list all names of family members whose ideas are represented. Your responses to this survey are confidential and will not be shared with your name attached. Thank you.

Please provide your name/s:

2. Would you welcome a check-in call from a ministry team member or the pastor?

No thanks

Yes, in the next two weeks

Yes, as soon as possible

3. If you answered yes, would you prefer to be contacted during the day or in the evening?

Daytime

Evening

4. If you'd like a check-in call, please provide a phone number where you can be reached:

5. What online content have you accessed during the COVID-19 pandemic? (*customize this list for your congregation, listing all of the ways that people can be in touch right now*)

Sunday morning recorded worship service

Live streaming of worship on Facebook

Monthly congregational newsletter

Content for children and/or youth

Weekly virtual study groups for adults

General Announcements regarding Covid-19

6. If you have not interacted with our online content, why not?

No interest

Wasn't aware of any

Difficult to access

Don't know how to access

No time

Other (please explain)

Survey Part II – Returning to in-person worship and other activities

Worship

When we do resume in-person worship service at church, it will be very different. To ensure your safety, here is what you can expect, at least for a while. We will:

(NOTE: REMOVE ANY OF THESE THAT WON'T APPLY IN YOUR CONGREGATION!)

- require everyone to wear a mask while indoors
- set up one-way foot traffic entering and exiting the building and sanctuary
- prop doors open so people do not have to touch handles, when possible
- provide hand sanitizer stations
- keep air moving with fans, windows and doors open when possible
- limit handouts of any kind (e.g., worship guide, notes pages, hymnals, Bibles, etc.)
- limit the number of people in the sanctuary, following public health guidelines
- allow members of your household to sit together, but only use every other pew and will seat non-related people on the same pew at least six feet apart
- not celebrate Holy Communion for a while or find a different way to celebrate it

- not pass offering plates, encouraging online giving, mailing your gifts, or dropping them in a box as you enter the sanctuary
- not have passing of the peace, and discourage shaking hands and hugging
- not have responsive readings and prayers
- not have choir
- not sing hymns (though there may be soloists)
- allow a longer period of time between worship service hours to facilitate social distancing; this may affect start times for worship
- not have fellowship time before or after worship services (or hold it outdoors, weather permitting)
- encourage you to limit the number of persons in restrooms
- provide limited childcare and/or Sunday School classes

1. As our local government eases restrictions on public gatherings, how do you think you will feel about returning to a worship service at church, with the above precautions in place? Select one:

I'm ready now

I will return at first opportunity but I'm nervous about it

I will wait a few weeks before I return

I have no idea how long it will be before I return

2. When our church begins gathering in person again, which ONE of the following would you most prefer?

Resume in-person worship services at our church

Meet in small groups in homes for a few more weeks before resuming in person worship services

Continue with online worship only

Alternate between attending in person and online, at least for a while

Not sure

3. In addition to our local government easing restrictions on public gatherings, are there other things you would want to see before you return to attend a worship service at church? Select all that apply:

Local businesses are open again

Local restaurant indoor seating areas are open again

Schools are open again

The number of coronavirus cases near me is very small

Most social distancing recommendations have been lifted

An effective vaccine is available

None of these
Not sure

4. Would you be willing to attend a worship service at a different time than you typically attend to allow people to be more spread out in the sanctuary?

Yes
No
Not sure

5. Would you be willing to attend a worship service in an overflow room to ensure people (in the sanctuary and overflow rooms) are spread out?

Yes
No
Not sure

6. Weather permitting, would you be comfortable attending outdoor worship services, if safe social distancing was observed?

Yes
No
Not sure

Other Activities

7. Would you be willing to attend your small group?

Yes, but only online
Yes, if it meets in a large space or outdoors
Not right away
I do not have a small group

8. Do you have children age 18 or younger who typically attend church with you?

Yes
No

9. If you bring children when you attend worship services again, would you allow them to attend their class where it typically meets?

Yes, if care is made to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus
Not right away
My children do not typically attend a class

10. What precautions do you expect the church to take in children's classes when they resume?

Select all that apply:

Reduce the number of people in each room or move to a larger room

Seat children where they cannot touch each other

Prohibit snacks that would cause children to put their hands to their mouths

Require teachers to wear masks

Encourage children to wear masks

Require teachers to wear gloves

Ask children to use hand sanitizer before entering

Plan activities in which children do not need to touch each other or stand or sit near each other

Other _____

Part III – Help us understand a little about who you are

1. How long have you been attending?

I am new in 2020

Less than 2 years

2-4 years

5-9 years

10+ years

2. What is your age group?

Less than 18

18-29

30-49

50-69

70+

I prefer not to answer

(Custom thank you upon completion; FEEL FREE TO EDIT!:)

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. You are an important part of our community. We care about your health and safety AND about your opinions.