

COVID PROTOCOL – FALL OF 2021

Protocol reviewed and revised by COVID Committee on Monday, November 8, 2021 including recommendations from Watonwan County Public Health. See changes in magenta below. This protocol is subject to change for events with larger attendance/occupancy-such as funerals, holiday services, etc.

Meeting following worship on Sunday, August 29th, in the Social Hall at Augustana. The objective of the meeting was to discuss and decide on a protocol to be followed by AES Ministries regarding future COVID restrictions that may need to be put in place.

Those in attendance at the meeting were Mark Kulseth, Terry Engel, Andy Freitag, John Coleman, Lisa Carlson, Lynn Watson, and Kristi Zellmann from Augustana. Becky Cobb also participated via speaker phone. Wayne Jurgens and Janet Bloomquist attended from East Sveadah. Pastor Mandy France was also in attendance. Joe Garza was unable to attend.

The group looked at current numbers for Watonwan County, as of August 27th, and discussed the different possibilities of what protocols could look like. There are currently 37 cases in Watonwan County. Pastor Mandy shared the guidelines that were used in her former parish and there was consensus of the group, to have a protocol in place so that no individual/s need to make a last minute decision when the COVID situation changes.

The following guidelines were agreed upon by the majority and will be used as the guide for future decisions needed as COVID case numbers are monitored in Watonwan County. The protocol for each Sunday will be made based on the numbers released each Friday. If a change in protocol needs to be made, a notice will be sent out via the UPDATE email.

1. Starting immediately, Communion kits will be utilized and distributed as members enter church and sign in for the service.
2. Starting immediately, any TLC meals that are served on Wednesday evenings will be catered food and servers will wear masks and gloves when serving food or working in the kitchen. NO HOMEMADE FOOD WILL BE SERVED AT CHURCH.
3. If cases reach 50 in Watonwan County, a mask mandate will be instituted for all worship services and social distancing of 3 feet will be implemented Ushers will be responsible for taping off every other pew in the sanctuary. Each church will decide their own coffee hour protocol. If masking is required, there will be NO coffee hour at East. Coffee Hour at Augustana will continue for those who choose to attend. Any food served will be store purchased, and kitchen workers will wear masks and gloves.
4. If cases reach 70 in Watonwan County, besides masks being mandated, there will also be 3 foot social distancing required during worship services. Coffee Hour at Augustana will be cancelled at this point until further notice.
5. If cases reach 90 in Watonwan County, masks will be mandated, 6-foot social distancing will be required during worship, but singing WILL continue to be allowed with masks in place. There will be No coffee hour.
6. If cases reach 100 in Watonwan County, there will be no gathering of any kind in the church until further notice. Any meetings held, will be conducted via ZOOM.
7. TLC will not meet if there are 50 known cases in the county. Any student that has a COVID test pending due to exposure or any other reason, they will not be allowed to attend TLC until they have negative test results. Masks are MANDATORY for TLC-both students and adults, regardless of what the county numbers are. This will be enforced.
8. The protocol for confirmation is to be decided.
The numbers used to determine TLC plans will be based on Watonwan County numbers on Monday.

ALL OF THE ABOVE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND WILL BE RE-EVALUATED AS THE NEED ARISES.

The piece below is what is included in the minutes from the August Council meeting at Augustana:

Pastor Mandy reported that she met with Erica Garza to discuss plans for TLC. After discussion regarding use of masks for TLC, there was a motion made by Kristi, seconded by Lynn to recommend the use of masks for students and staff attending TLC. Motion carried. Further discussion will continue on this topic.