

Valid at least through July 31, 2020, or until replaced by Safe Operating Task Force

The St. John's Safe Operating Task Force has developed the following policy to guide decisions about funeral services during this time. The church believes that gathering to commend our dead is an important part of the life of faith, and pastors stand ready to help families creatively imagine how to mark this time. These restrictions are developed to make gathering possible while keeping guests and staff as safe as possible during this time of pandemic. While the state of Minnesota may allow for less restrictive gatherings within this time frame, the congregation's leadership is moving slowly so that we can all adapt to the new requirements for physical distancing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, **St. John's preference through July 31 is to do funeral services outdoors** at the grave whenever possible. If an indoor service is necessary because of weather or because family cannot all walk to the grave, our sanctuary is available with the restrictions below.

1. A 50-person limit will be set. No funeral time should be publicized during this time of limited seating. Family may invite guests, and the invitation should include a reminder that 1) anyone with symptoms of illness must stay home and 2) all guests should plan to wear face masks and maintain the appropriate feet of distance from anyone not in their household.
2. Funerals must be scheduled 24 hours apart to allow for cleaning between services. Scheduling needs to be cleared through a pastor before a service is confirmed.
3. Visitation time will not be available at the church before or after the service.
4. A procession with the casket or urn will not take place at the beginning of the service. The casket or urn will be placed up front by the funeral directors.
5. If the family wishes for a prayer with the pastors before the service, it will be in St. John's Hall.
6. Three doors will be used to enter the building: Door 2 (the center west doors by the Commons, with handicap entrance); and doors #9 and #11 (the two exterior doors to the narthex). Ushers should guide people into the sanctuary to avoid crowding and assign their seating.
7. The front two pews on either side should not be used for seating.
8. Bulletins should be placed in pews ahead of time at appropriate spacing, and participants should be guided to appropriate seats. Members of the same household may sit together but households should be seated six feet apart (to the side and front to back).
9. All guests should wear face masks, except when speaking in the service. If a guest does not have a mask ushers should offer one as they enter.
10. No congregational singing will be allowed. If a soloist is desired, St. John's may provide someone to sing hymns from the balcony, if available.
11. The family may provide no more than 3 members to speak, whether to offer a remembrance or read a lesson. All other speaking will be done by the pastor(s). The speakers will use the lectern side microphone. They may remove masks while speaking and place them on again when done.
12. Guests will be ushered out one pew at a time and urged to go immediately outside following the service.
13. No funeral receptions are being provided at the church at this time.