



Martin Luther
**Evangelical
Lutheran
Church**

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COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

Many of you may be wondering how our congregation is going to approach this year's Advent and Christmas season and which measures will be taken concerning COVID-19 to keep us all connected and safe at the same time. After much deliberation and taking into consideration the voices of our members during the past few weeks, Church Council has voted to implement the following proof-of-vaccination policy for our Martin Luther Church (MLC):

1. Scope and purpose of this policy

To keep the risk of infection with COVID-19 in our community as low as possible and to protect all involved from severe illness and hospitalization, the vaccine policy for the Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church will be effective December 15, 2021. At the same time, we promise to stay approachable to those who are hesitant to be vaccinated for various reasons and to provide assistance to all who need it.

2. Categories

Worship Services Indoors

Proof of Vaccination and ID is required for all visitors aged 12+ and will be confirmed upon entry. Also, we will continue screening for symptoms. Physical distancing and wearing of masks are still mandatory and visitors will sit in every other pew. Singing in this setting is possible. Every Sunday, there will also be a video of the sermon available on YouTube. We also plan on hosting online events, like Zoom Bible Study, to be able to nurture our spiritual growth and keep in touch with each other.

Groups

Proof of vaccination is mandatory for all participants aged 12+ and checked by group leaders before every meeting. Groups can meet in the church foyer or sanctuary. Physical distancing and wearing of masks are mandatory. Please schedule your meeting in agreement with the church office.

Volunteers

Proof of Vaccination is mandatory for all age 12 + and must be submitted ASAP. Physical distancing and wearing of masks are mandatory. Send to office via E-mail or drop off.

Confirmation Class

Proof of Vaccination is mandatory for participants. Physical distancing and wearing of masks is mandatory. A rapid test will be done by all confirmands and volunteers before class starts.

Choir

Proof of Vaccination is mandatory for participants. Physical distancing and wearing of masks is mandatory.

Visitors

Due to the vaccination guidelines for daycares, unvaccinated visitors can't enter our shared office space during business hours. Depending on the state of the pandemic, council and staff will consider carefully together which forms of contact and counsel can be offered.

3. Exemptions (apply to all categories)

Medical exemptions must include if the reasons are temporary or permanent and must be written by a licensed doctor or nurse practitioner. The reason for the exemption doesn't need to be specified. In consultation with the office and leadership team, special safety measures, like rapid tests, will be asked for in these cases. If people are hesitant to get vaccinated but are willing to take safety measures like rapid tests on site before entering the church, our ministry team will decide case by case if exemptions might be possible in the setting of worship as an essential service.

4. Workers/Staff

Proof of Vaccination is recommended. If a worker declines to get vaccinated for reasons protected by the Human Rights Code, MLC will mandate frequent COVID-19 testing, worker relocation and modified work or reassignment.

5. Non-Compliance

Any member and visitor who is not compliant with this vaccine policy will be excluded from in-person events.

6. Privacy considerations

To be able to take appropriate action quickly in the event of COVID-19 cases in our community, we will make sure to archive the vaccination status of workers and volunteers in a confidential and secure way and will only use it for the valid purpose for which it is collected. For visitors of services and events we will follow the privacy consideration guidelines of the City of Toronto and not store any vaccine information.

7. Church contact

We recognize that any decisions around COVID-19 protocols will not satisfy everyone all the time. Should you have questions or concerns around the process, or the implications of this decision for you, please do not hesitate to contact the office by phone or email. This policy is flexible and might be changed as council sees fit during the coming months.

While strongly encouraged, these recommendations are voluntary, and are not intended to be legally enforceable under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020.