



As local congregations prepare to return to daily worship gatherings, we have compiled a list of suggestions to support your planning and to assist you in providing a safe space for your staff and congregation members.

Each congregation's return-to-worship plan will be unique, and a variety of plans may be required based on location, local requirements, or service offerings. Key factors to consider include the location of the worship center, the number of staff and congregation members, and the ability to ensure proper social distancing while interacting.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- If you have not already done so, deep clean your entire place of worship. Consider shampooing carpets, sanitizing seating, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, general gathering areas, and media equipment/microphones.
- Temporarily remove all shared items from the Center including but not limited to Bibles, hymnals, pens, information/connect cards, etc., from the backs of chairs and in lobbies. Do not hand out flyers, worship guides/programs, etc.
- Consider using tape/directional signage to promote social distancing.
- **Communicate!** Tell your congregation through signage, e-mails, and social media about how you've prepared the church for their arrival.
 - We've prepared a clean, safe environment for you.
 - We've created a non-touch experience for you!
- A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting. **These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing.**

WORSHIP SERVICE LOGISTICS

- We recommend offering multiple services to encourage a greater chance of social distancing. It is important to place limits on the number of people who can attend a service based on the size of your Center. Having members/guests sign up for a service time can support organization and minimize confusion.
- All service offerings should be accompanied by an online viewing option for those who are vulnerable as well as those who are not ready to come back to a group setting. High risk individuals (people over 65 and those with underlying conditions), whether staff, volunteers, or congregation members, should continue to social distance at home.
- Doors should be propped open to limit the number of times they are touched. Consider directing people to use a set number of entrances and exits if your Center has multiple points of entry.
- Signage should be placed around the Center to remind people to greet and acknowledge each other without physically touching.
- Hand sanitizers and/or wipes should be readily available in all areas that are open for use.
- Consider limiting/closing cafes, other meeting spaces on campus, etc.
- Social distancing should be practiced in all seating. Setting seating limits according to social distancing protocol is extremely important.
- Pay close attention to nursery/childcare capacity if continuing to offer the service.



WORSHIP SERVICE LOGISTICS

- After each service, the space must be properly disinfected. Allow enough time between services to support a thorough cleaning.
- Every effort should be made to keep accurate attendance records in case contact tracing needs to be conducted. Again, having members pre-register for a service will allow for electronic records to serve as a starting point.
- Group singing, such as choirs, should be limited. Plan for a few individuals to lead your worship experience.
- Consider restroom capacity. Assign members of staff or volunteers to monitor restroom usage and clean stalls after each use.
- Continue to use no-touch alternatives for collecting offerings. Drop boxes and the use of personal electronic devices provide easy ways for members to engage. Plates, buckets or other containers should not be passed among the congregation.

LEADERSHIP

- Pastors, staff, and congregation leadership must model healthy social distancing boundaries.
- Pastors must greet guests while maintaining safe distances and without physically touching members of the congregation.
- Church leadership must set clear boundaries as it relates to service seating capacity and must not make exceptions for the sake of pleasing members.
- Church leadership must have a clear plan for tracking attendance, those who are ill and how the Center/campus is cleaned and disinfected daily.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How will you communicate your safety plan and best practices to the congregation?
- How many people can your worship space hold if you are worshipping observing social distancing guidelines (with family/household groups sitting together)?
- How will you set a limit for attendance at worship gatherings so there is room for visitors to join you and so you don't go over your pre-set guidelines?
- How will you advertise new services times and explain arrival and dismissal procedures?
- How will you ensure thorough sanitation and disinfection in regards to shared spaces before and after service(s)?
- How will you discourage group gathering/congregating after worship services?
- If someone contracts COVID-19, how will you communicate with your congregation and members who may have come into contact with that individual while maintaining privacy?