

AS OUR CHURCHES REOPEN, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO FOLLOW AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

BE INFORMED:

Know the risk factors for the virus. This can help you make decisions on staffing, volunteers, and whether you will return sooner or later. For example, those with preexisting conditions and those over 65 years old are at a higher risk of experiencing worse symptoms than others if they contract the virus. Click the link to see Safe Practices from local pastors, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_l1CMACGg0

PREPARE YOUR CHURCH:

- Deep clean your entire church. Where will germs be transferred? Consider shampooing carpets, sanitizing pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones.
- Use chemicals and disinfectants as directed and allow for the proper dry times.
- Pay attention to the preschool and children's areas. Consider removing everything nonessential from the room to limit surfaces for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses.
- Temporarily remove Bibles, hymnals, pens, information cards, etc., from the backs of chairs/pews.
- Post signs about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings.
- Consider placing some kind of blocks in your sanctuary or classrooms to ensure social distancing. Tape, remove chairs, use cones, etc. to indicate the distance needed.
- Tell your congregation through flyers on the doors, email, and social media about how you've prepared the church for their arrival. Be sure to use the words "clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience" or something similar. Also say that if they are sick, then they should not be present and can join online instead.
- Consider having an online giving option, so you are not passing an offering plate or bucket, or consider a set location for the plate or bucket.

SERVICE TIMES & LOCATIONS:

- Keep an online meeting option for those who are afraid or unable to attend your service in person. Many churches have seen a spike in engagement since their online presence has increased.
- You can offer multiple services to encourage a greater chance of social distancing. One way to ensure your services are evenly spread is to have people sign up for a service. You can use Facebook events and have people mark which event they'll attend.
- Remember that if you have multiple services, you will need to clean between each service. You can shorten the service time to help with the timing of cleaning thoroughly. Some churches are moving to having multiple services during the week to allow for cleaning in between service times.
- Determine how many volunteers you have available to assist. Limit volunteers to those who do not have preexisting conditions and those who are under 65 years old.



AMENITIES: COFFEE, BULLETINS, AND HANDSANITIZER:

- Restrooms: Special consideration should be give to restroom usage. Encourage sanitization and healthy habits.
- Do not hand out bulletins. Do not allow people to come by and pick them up out of stacks.
- We recommend withholding coffee stations, donuts, or groups meals at this time. You can stay attuned to the guidelines to know when is best to reintroduce these services.
- If you choose to keep your restrooms open be sure to post signs about washing hands in bathrooms with appropriate guidelines to doing so.
- Display handsanitizer throughout the church. It may be difficult to obtain at this point, so consider if you should meet in person without this element.
- Supply masks for those without one to increase comfort levels. Again, these may be difficult to obtain, but you could have people make masks as a service to the church..

STAFF: GREETERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Provide security and enlist ushers to be both inside and outside greeters. Instruct them on how to greet post-quarantine: NO hand shaking or hugs.
- Ensure doors are propped open or have the greeters hold them open.
- Greeters and Volunteers should be able to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building. Train them beforehand if possible.
- If your bathrooms are open, have greeters monitor the bathrooms to ensure hands are washed and social distancing is followed.
- Consider a temperature check on all staff and volunteers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUPS

- We recommend that you have your church members enter the building and immediately go into the worship service to be seated.
- Consider whether you will have Sunday school or small groups
- Make sure you're communicating if and when these classes will resume.
- Consider dividing your groups to maintain the social distancing standards. You can also allow small groups to use the church on different days/nights if you choose to meet in person.
- If you do have class, please know you should clean the doorknobs, water fountains, and other high traffic areas in between uses.
- Have a plan for your leaders and teachers. Will they discuss what God revealed to them in the quarantine? Will you encourage a prayer and praise time?
- If you don't have class, make sure you have provided an outline for your teachers and leaders to continue engagement for your groups. This is still an excellent time to build classes and community.



PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN

- The State of Alabama is still recommending no more than 12 children in a room for childcare.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 2 years of age and under do not wear masks or face coverings. Please keep this in mind as you make decisions.
- Here is a good rule of thumb: If you wear a mask, it's too soon to have your preschool and children areas open. Masks may scare the children.
- Consider not opening preschool and children on the first Sunday back. Some churches are choosing to reopen the preschool and children areas when schools are open.
- Pre-register children to limit how many are in any room at a time. Some churches are starting with a five child limit in each room at first.
- Limit leaders in the preschool and children's areas to those who do not have pre-existing conditions. Also limit leaders to those under 65 years old.
- Have extra volunteers to help in the preschool ministry where some children may suffer from separation anxiety after only being with parents for a long time.
- Have only one person handle child check in stations and do not pass the check-in device.
- Do not let parents walk their child to class, instead have them drop them off at the welcome desk.
- Have a check list of what's been cleaned and when in each room.
- Develop a list of procedures for your volunteers. Train them on this list through Zoom prior to the first meeting.

CHOIRS, ORCHESTRAS, PRAISE TEAMS, BANDS, ETC.:

- Praise Teams: Do not use the full team. Consider rotations. Assign microphones and use the same one every time.
- Choir: Consider suspending choir practices as forceful breathing and exhaling can expel the virus further if someone is infected. However, you could consider using smaller numbers as you reintroduce choir to the service. Also space members out appropriately (consider using a diamond pattern with six feet of spacing between members).
- Temporarily suspend using hymnals. Encourage your members to print/use their own music sheets or place the music in assigned seating prior to the service.
- Orchestras: Keep parts to a minimum and ensure the orchestras are spaced appropriately. Encourage brass players to bring their own towel to catch spit so it doesn't land on the carpet.
- Consider not using choir robes as space for robe changing may be limited. Just as healthcare workers change or wash their coats after each use, so should the robes be dry cleaned and stored in the bags from the cleaners.
- Wipe down music stands after each use.
- Dismiss the choir in a fashion to allow distancing.



TECH TEAMS:

- Clean microphones, headphones, computers, laptops, etc. after every use. Keep a record of when each item was cleaned. DO NOT use water. Rubbing alcohol or alcohol-based cleaners are best.
- Rotate your tech team if possible. Again, encourage those who feel sick or run down to not come into the service.
- Keep using the online services. Facebook may be more accessible as many people have accounts, but consider other options like YouTube for those who'd like to watch on their smart TVs.
- Add in text on screens through projectors if you haven't already. This may be a good opportunity to do so.
- If you don't have media support for announcements or singing, then print texts and place them in the pews/chairs.

