

REGATHERING RECOMMENDATIONS

CPC of the Presbytery of Florida

The Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC) is aware of the desire that a number of congregations have to resume worship amid the continued threats from Covid-19. We respect those feelings even as we refer congregations to the statistics indicating a continuing rise in the number of cases diagnosed daily in the State of Florida. Mindful that we are all children of God, we wish only the best for our brothers and sisters, and we rejoice that for our world today God has given us the means of communication and compassion to be shared in many ways that glorify God's name.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE remains the best practice for maintaining consistency and accessibility while continuing to respect those in the congregation who are most at risk for Covid-19 infection. Even if in-person worship is resumed, it is hoped that online worship will continue as well. It is prudent in all cases to shorten services to a maximum of 45 minutes to decrease the time for possible exposure and maintain the highest effectiveness of cleaning procedures.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS, such as Sunday School, Bible study, committee meetings, should remain online.

OUTDOOR SPACE is the safest option for gathering. Attendance should be limited to fifty (50) or less, and the proper protocols of hygiene, masking, and social distancing should be observed.

IF A CONGREGATION PLANS TO RESUME IN-PERSON GATHERING IN A SANCTUARY OR CHURCH BUILDING, the CPC offers the following guidelines as a reminder of the complexity and the responsibility associated with regathering for in-person worship. Before considering any plans to regather, please check with the church's insurance representative about the liability the church assumes if such action is taken.

PROMOTE HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES: Provide an adequate supply of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Encourage attendees to use as they enter and exit the space.

MASKS: Masks have been shown to be the single most effective way to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Encourage the use of masks for all persons age 2 and older. Masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.

INTENSIFY CLEANING, DISINFECTION, AND VENTILATION:

- Clean and disinfect any surfaces in the space such as doorknobs, door push bars, railings, bathrooms, pews, chairs, carpeting. Remember that the space should be cleaned both before and after each service.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned or sanitized. Remove all hymnals, Bibles, books, paper, and writing instruments from pews. Encourage congregants to bring their own Bible to worship! Use a screen to project words and images or hand out paper bulletins that may be disposed of immediately.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc.

- Ensure all water systems and features (drinking fountains, decorative fountains, baptismal fonts) are safe to use after a prolonged shutdown to minimize water-borne diseases.

PROMOTE SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- Limit the size of in-person gatherings. Encourage church attendees to reserve a seat by phone or internet prior to the day of the gathering.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways, signs on doors and walls to maintain a distance of six (6) feet apart. On all sides.
- Modify the method used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary location for offering plates, baskets, etc. Encourage electronic giving options.
- Suspend traditions of physical contact such as passing the peace, fellowship times, or shaking hands with the pastor.
- Consider using pre-packaged communion elements for use during the Lord's Supper.

MUSIC:

- Consider using only piano and/or organ, and no other wind instruments to prevent the spray of saliva into the air.
- Limit congregational singing. If singing is desired, it should be done with masks in place, as singing has been shown to be a primary conduit for the spread of Covid-19.

NURSERY/CHILDCARE:

Suspend offering these services because of the difficulties of managing appropriate social distancing and hygiene.

CONTACT TRACING:

Ask those worshiping to sign in with name, address, phone, and email. In case a person in attendance becomes sick, this information would be used to contact those who have potentially been exposed to the virus.

PLAN AHEAD:

- Be sure to make a plan ahead of time to address the need to protect those who will be gathered together. There are many factors to consider when planning to re-open church building for worship. Each church building is different and each congregation should adhere to a plan that works best for that group.

**Above all, answer the question *“Why are we doing what we are doing?”*
Are we following our own agenda or God's?**

Please refer to the following chart for specific guidelines for indoor worship:

**RECOMMENDED SACRED SPACE INDOOR USE:
COVID-19 SAFER STANDARDS CHART SUPPLEMENT**

	Indoors
<p>Maximum Number of People</p>	<p>Determined by how many people the meeting space can hold keeping a minimum of six feet apart on all sides. Families from the same household may sit together. <i>All numbers include clergy and lay support team members.</i> Here is a link to a social distancing room space calculator, which calculates by number of people or by room size: https://www.banquettablespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator</p>
<p>Spacing</p>	<p>Designate seating or standing spaces with at least six (6) feet apart on all sides between individuals or families from the same household. At least every other pew/row of chairs cordoned off. Do not seat or position persons directly in front of/behind one another</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Forty-five (45) minutes or less total in the space per individual</p>
<p>One Way and Traffic Flow Markings</p>	<p>Yes Idea is to keep people from crossing paths head-on; arrows in tape on the floor or signs may help direct traffic into and out of worship space, into and out of seating, and similar.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Online (or Alternative) Signups</p> <p>Including name and contact information; can also include signing up for seat/placement locations (for example, SignUp Genius)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Necessary</u> for Contact Tracing Purposes</p> <p>If no online signups, names and contact information may be recorded by a designated usher such that only one person touches the pen and paper</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Assigned or Recorded Seating/Placement</p> <p>This information is necessary for contact tracing so we may let people know if they may have been exposed to COVID-19.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Necessary</u> for Contact Tracing Purposes</p> <p>If assigned seating is not included in online signups, a designated usher may record along with names and contact information</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Masks</p> <p>Church must have masks available for persons who do not bring their own; medical grade masks not required</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Choir, Singing, Chanting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Musical Instruments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes -- other than wind instruments, which may <u>not</u> be used</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Holy Communion</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No -- not safe in any form at this time</p>

Offering Plate	No
Printed Materials	<p>No -- not safe at this time All books and material to be removed from space (hymnals BCP, pencils, offering cards, etc.)</p>
Processions	No -- not safe at this time
Restrooms	<p>Emergency use only Post signs at each restroom detailing safer restroom use and safety precautions as necessary. Otherwise cordoned off</p>
Food and Beverages	No
<p>COVID-19 Contact Tracing Plan</p>	<p>Remind those using the indoor space: <u>Whom to contact</u> at the church if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and/or test positive within five (5) days after this space use.</p> <p>When such information is reported, (i) others at the gathering may be notified of potential exposure (names will not be shared), (ii) the public health department of the county in which the church is located will be contacted.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Cleaning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Before and after every use, all surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Floors should be mopped and/or vacuumed. Anything left in the pews/chairs should be disposed of. All cleaning should be done wearing latex or similar gloves and masks.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Designated Space and Process for Assisting a Person who Exhibits Symptoms or Becomes Ill on Site</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If a person exhibits symptoms or indicates illness while in the indoor space, escort the person (from a distance of six (6) feet) to a designated outdoor space, from which such person may wait for a ride or otherwise leave the area. Follow contact tracing protocols as appropriate.</p>