

Faith Over Fear

Protecting congregants during the COVID-19 pandemic



Gatherings

- **Worship Services**

- Online worship services are still the safest option.
- Consider holding multiple services in order to lower the number of people at each service. At the same time, continue to make remote services available for your most vulnerable members to attend.
- All attendees should wear masks while indoors, and outdoors when less than six feet apart. The CDC recommends universal masking while indoors is best practice even while distancing. If there is singing without masks, congregants should be seated at least 10 feet apart from people they do not live with.
- Improve air circulation and get fresh outdoor air into the building by opening the windows whenever the weather allows it, and use fans to increase the effectiveness of the open windows.
- Ensure that singers and/or a band are placed as far as possible away from attendees. As singers further omit respiratory droplets, this protects both the band and members of the congregation.
- Encourage members to sign up for specific worship services so that you can limit the number of people at each service and maintain social distancing.
- Only individuals who live in the same household should sit together; otherwise, people should be sitting at least six feet apart. Block off every other row to maintain this distancing.
- Remove books and other items from the pews, and do not share equipment such as microphones.
- Encourage greeters to stand at each door to hold them open for people as they come in and go out of rooms.
- Dismiss congregants row-by-row to maintain social distancing.

- **Gatherings After Services**

- Gather outdoors instead of indoors whenever possible.
- Plan gatherings that allow people to continue wearing masks and maintain social distancing.
- Give cues that help maintain social distancing—physical guides (like tape on the floor or signs on the wall) can manage the flow of traffic and indicate how far apart people should stand from those outside their household.
- Avoid congregating in small spaces like foyers and stairwells.

- **Weddings and Funeral Services**

- Follow the same protocol as for worship services.
- Receptions/funeral gatherings are subject to following capacity restrictions and social distancing requirements.

- **Gatherings for Service Work and Projects**

- Gatherings for service work and/or projects should be held outside whenever possible.
- Provide ways for people to sign up in advance so that you can limit the size of the gathering — and make contact tracing easier at the same time.
- Have a sign-in sheet with check-in and check-out times for youth groups and other gatherings where people often attend on a drop-in basis.
- Gather supplies in advance and organize them to minimize sharing, especially high-touch materials. Where that's not possible, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group at a time, and clean and disinfect them between use.
- Plan out seating or designate places to stand in advance so that people can maintain social distances from those outside their household.

Staying Connected/Community Engagement

- **Visiting Congregants**

- Arrange video or telephone calls instead of in-person visits to protect vulnerable members of your community.

- **Financial Health, Donations and Safety**

- Encourage members to donate/tithe at a designated box set up at the entrances instead of passing a collection plate or bucket.
- Provide online options for donations, like a link on your website or services like Tithely, Cash App, PayPal, Zelle, and Venmo.
- Provide people with your mailing address so they can send donations through the mail.
- Post announcements online, project them on the screen, or announce them during the service instead of passing out bulletins.