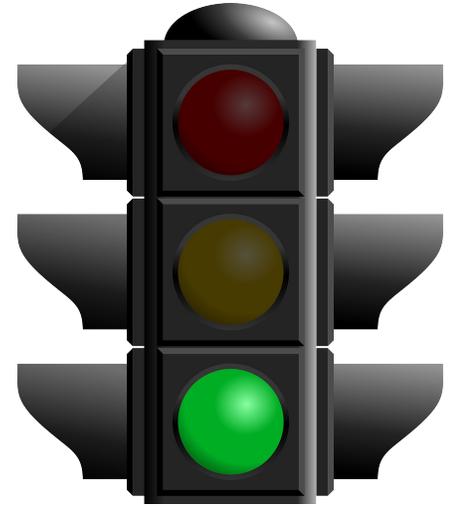


GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES IN GREEN PHASE



- Continue to exercise **extreme caution** when considering a return to in-person worship.
- In-person worship should not be resumed until your region is in the green phase.
- Even in the green phase, **risks remain and many precautions need to be taken to decrease risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19**. It is wise to move slowly, perhaps more slowly than the government's timeline.
- Gathering size must be limited to maintain social distancing. In the green phase, gatherings of 250 or more are prohibited. Restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues (casinos, theaters, and shopping malls) can open at 50% occupancy. Faith communities have been exempt from these orders, but are strongly encouraged by the governor to enforce social distancing measures.



IN GREEN PHASE, THE FOLLOWING MEASURES MUST BE UNDERTAKEN TO MINIMIZE INFECTION RISK DURING ANY IN-PERSON GATHERINGS, PER THE CDC (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html)

- Soap, hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and no-touch trash cans must be available
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared items after each use per CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>). If multiple services are offered, allow ample time in between for thorough cleaning and disinfection
- Gathering outdoors is preferable
- Ventilation systems should be operating properly and circulation of outdoor air should be increased as much as possible (e.g., opening doors and windows)
- Use physical guides to ensure at least 6 feet between all in attendance. Consider how this can be done in small, highly trafficked spaces like bathrooms and hallways.
- Cloth face coverings should be worn by everyone age 2 and older
- Limit sharing of touched objects, such as bulletins, hymnals, Bibles, and offering plates
- Forego hugging and handshakes
- Continue to offer safer alternatives to in-person worship services, such as online worship and outdoor events with necessary social distancing and hygiene measures in place
- Develop a plan to track attendance, identify those who have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19, and notify local health officials and other congregants about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality
- Encourage older adults and those with chronic medical conditions to remain at home and participate virtually
- Post signs to remind people of measures in place to prevent infection

CHURCHES SHOULD FOREGO OTHER HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES, including singing and sharing communion, for now. (No safe means or alternative exists for communion in a corporate setting at this time.)

REASONS TO REMAIN CAUTIOUS AND SLOW TO REOPEN:

- Reports of COVID-19 outbreaks in churches that have reopened, even when trying to maintain social distancing and disinfection practices
- Risk of infection increases when people are in close, direct contact (> 6 ft. and speaking or singing) for longer than 10 minutes in an enclosed space. Worship is a much more intimate activity than shopping, for example, and inherently carries more risk.
- Many in our churches are vulnerable to serious illness, including death (those 65 and older, those with chronic illness).
- Without a vaccine or established immunity from past infections, most people are susceptible to becoming sick or transmitting COVID-19. Even young, healthy people have become critically ill and died.
- This is an evolving situation, and it will take weeks to know the impacts of loosening restrictions in the state. Churches must stay up-to-date on the latest guidelines from local health officials and be pre-prepared for the possibility of stricter measures being put back into place in the event of a surge in COVID-19 cases.