

Physical Distancing at Church Tip Sheet

Set up your facilities as needed to support people in maintaining six feet of physical distancing from the time they enter the building and worship space until they exit.

Why?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stresses that the primary rule for interrupting the spread of the coronavirus is to consistently practice physical distancing of six feet or more between people at all times. The Re-entering Well Task Force has likely already prepared the congregation for ongoing, significant changes in behavior at church to ensure that measures are in place to monitor and reinforce the practice of physical distancing.

When?

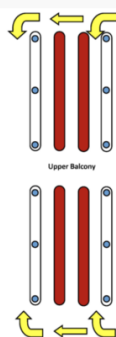
Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Church facilities should be set up to ensure people can easily maintain physical distancing from the time they enter church property until they leave.
- ☐ Post clearly visible signs outside your church doors asking people to continue practicing physical distancing both inside and outside the church.
- ☐ Consider using every other or every third pew for family seating.
 - ☐ Rope or tape off pews as necessary. See the model, below.

Here is a schematic Wesley UMC in Morgantown created to see how many could safely gather in their 350 seat sanctuary. They found that they can only seat 60 people at a time with 6 feet of social distancing requirements.

Pews are 13' long
Balcony Pews are 15' long
Can only sit in every 3rd pew to maintain 6 foot distancing
~36 people—main sanctuary
~12 people—upper and lower balconies
~60 individuals max
Families together reduce seating in pews from 4 to 3 and 3 to 2 groupings respectively
Ushers direct people to seating and direct people to leave.
One way in and out.



- ☐ At the completion of worship each Sunday, instruct congregants to exit by rows instead of all at once. Maintain six-feet of physical distancing and have ushers on-hand to ensure that there is no “bottle-necking” at any exit.

- ☐ Limit church bathroom use to the number of people who can simultaneously be in the space while maintaining physical distancing.
 - ☐ Make sure signs are clearly visible outside the bathrooms to encourage this practice.

Additional Resources

- Workplace Prevention Strategies: To prevent and reduce transmission and maintain healthy business operations in non-healthcare workplace (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/workplaces-businesses/index.html>

Enforcing Necessary Health Policies Tip Sheet

Leaders, identified and equipped by the task force, must take responsibility for enforcing necessary policies to create a safe space for people who come into our church buildings to worship.

Why?

While it may sound a bit dramatic, the cost of not observing precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may literally be life or death. Churches that ignore mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and physical distancing are endangering the health and wellbeing of unvaccinated individuals and putting those with compromised immune systems in danger. Some countries have recorded a high percentage of COVID-19 cases that are traceable to faith community gatherings.

In this ongoing pandemic phase, it is still essential to understand the importance of following health and safety protocols:

- Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has a temperature (to prevent the spread of the virus);
- Maintain six feet apart from others not in your immediate family or pod (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom free);
- Wear a face mask at all times when away from home or not in your pod (to protect yourself and others);
- Do not touch your face (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and use hand-sanitizer to clean hands after using the restroom or after touching a surface (to kill the virus).

When?

Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Who?

Pastors and church leaders should model protocols at all times and speak often about the guidelines with intentions of positively influencing participant behaviors. They should also help the entire gathering understand that we are our sibling's keeper and demonstrate this by helping one another follow all health guidelines.

The Re-Entering Well Task Force should identify and train a team of "wellbeing guides" who will ensure that physical distancing and other prevention measures are observed during gatherings. Please note that pastors will not be able to focus on this in addition to their other responsibilities on Sunday mornings and gatherings where they are responsible for teaching or leading.

Ushers and greeters should be trained and paired with wellbeing guides who are able to manage potential confrontations with people who do not adhere to the health safety guidelines.

Implementation Checklist

- ❑ Select the right people for these tasks. The wellbeing guides must be:
 - ❑ Willing to ensure adherence to policies outside and inside of the building;
 - ❑ Able to comport themselves as a non-anxious presence;
 - ❑ Calm and reassuring when interacting with participants, and aware that some people may have anxieties about being in public settings. These anxieties may present themselves in unexpected ways; and
 - ❑ Reliable and willing to answer questions.
- ❑ Develop a training session to:
 - ❑ Review this Tip Sheet
 - ❑ Create clear talking points that enforce the fact that we are in this together as we seek to create a safe space for all. Role playing and scenario planning should be a significant part of the training. For example:
 - ❑ If someone is approaching the church without a facemask say something like: *"May I get you a mask? One of the ways we show our love and care for one another is requiring everyone to wear one."*
 - ❑ If someone refuses to wear a mask one might say: *"I understand that masks are uncomfortable but they are required for everyone's safety. If you are uncomfortable wearing a mask, please join us virtually. Thanks for understanding."*
 - ❑ If someone is getting closer than six feet: *"One of the most difficult things for me is to remember not to get too close to people. We put the tape on the ground and in the seats as a visual reminder. Thanks for helping us keep that protocol in place."*
 - ❑ Talk with your team about other scenarios and create scripts. Be sure to explore worst case scenarios.
 - ❑ Schedule guides in pairs for mutual support, and communicate to the leadership team the strategic locations where wellbeing guides may be located during gatherings.
- ❑ Consider developing a mechanism whereby wellbeing guides can call for backup if participant resistance emerges or if the gathering is particularly large.

Wellbeing guides will play a key leadership role in helping a church do re-entry well. They will also provide leadership that ensures that blame and stigma related to the diagnosis of COVID-19 or decisions about vaccinations are avoided within the congregation. Knowing and sharing honest and factual information will enhance success in this role.

Additional Resources

- "Standing Too Close. Not Covering Coughs. If Someone Is Violating Physical Distancing Rules, What Do You Do?" <https://time.com/5819816/coronavirus-social-distancing/>
While this is an older article (even before we knew to call it physical distancing instead of social distancing) it provides some helpful examples of what you can do.

Tracking Attendance Tip Sheet

Develop a method to track attendance at in-person worship and other gatherings. This is especially important in case someone develops COVID-19 so that you might notify those who have been exposed.

Why?

Until further notice, church leaders must keep track of every person attending in-person worship or other meetings. This practice facilitates the process whereby individuals at a particular gathering may be notified of potential exposure if anyone present later tests positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. It is also a good practice for follow-up and staying in relationships with people you haven't seen in several consecutive weeks.

When?

The church's task force will follow local and state directives to determine when the threat of the virus has sufficiently passed and attendance monitoring is no longer required.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Various methods are available for documenting attendance (pen/paper, tablets, an APP using cell phones). Regardless of approach, tailor the method to your context and uphold all protocols.
- ☐ It is important that the selected tool (be it pen and paper, cell phone APP, or electronic tablets) not contribute to spreading the virus by making hand sanitizer available for people to use before and after contact. If a tablet is used, it should be wiped off frequently.
- ☐ Research the best methods to record attendance and contact information. Here are some examples:
 - ☐ Prepare in advance an alphabetized list of all church members and their contact information to streamline the process for checking off names. Be sure the date of the gathering is also captured.
 - ☐ Establish a welcome station for visitors with clear signage that enables up to two people to complete information cards while maintaining six feet of distance between them. The attendance monitor will guide the process. Completed information cards are placed in a designated container. After each guest leaves the station, the greeter wipes down the tablet, table pen, and any other touched surfaces.
 - ☐ If you incorporate an RSVP process for everyone planning to attend a gathering, those who RSVP will constitute the master list for recording actual attendance.
 - ☐ Train attendance monitors to capture the names, phone numbers and/or email addresses of attendees.
 - ☐ Attendance monitors will agree to be present before doors open for the gathering.

- ☐ Attendance monitors will be stationed by the entrance(s). It is essential to maintain physical distancing in either location.
- ☐ Monitors should be instructed in the “why” of tracking attendance and be able to assure people that the information is being gathered as a precaution to ensure the safety and well-being of all who are gathered. It will not be used for any other purpose and will not be shared with anyone other than health officials as needed. Task force members need to ensure this understanding is maintained.
- ☐ While the risk of spreading the virus is reduced in outdoor settings, attendance recording is still encouraged. Attendance information should be kept in the church office in a place known to the pastor and task force members.
- ☐ Participants should be provided with hand sanitizer to use before and after handling pens, clipboards, tablets, etc. Pens, tablets, clipboards, and other items should be wiped down after every use.

Greeters, Ushers, and Communion Stewards Tip Sheet

The risk for unvaccinated greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards is high as most of their tasks do not allow for appropriate physical distancing and/or handling items that multiple people touch.

Why?

As churches continue to take steps to ensure people's safety and wellbeing, managing expectations is a vital part of reopening buildings and gathering well. Greeters, ushers and Communion stewards play an essential role in setting expectations and providing warm hospitality in the midst of this pandemic.

When?

Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Clearly mark or tape-off pews that are closed for physical distancing.
- ☐ If your situation warrants it, establish set routes for entering and exiting the building and sanctuary. Post clearly visible signs to inform parishioners of the new traffic flow. Orderly ways of entering and exiting the sanctuary and pews will increase safety and assist people in comfortably finding their place within the worship space.
- ☐ Recruit and train greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards who are not vulnerable to the virus. Training to include:
 - ☐ Clear information about COVID-19 transmission and why it is important for everyone to adopt the following wellbeing protocols:
 - Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has a temperature (to prevent the spread of the virus);
 - Maintain six feet apart from others not in your immediate family or pod (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom free);
 - Wear a facemask when not alone or with your family or pod (to protect others);
 - Do not touch your face, mouth, or eyes (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
 - Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the toilet and use hand-sanitizer to clean hands after exiting the restroom or after touching other common surfaces (to kill the virus).
 - ☐ Teach greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards how to wear masks properly:
 - ☐ Cover both nose and mouth and secure a close fit around the face.
 - ☐ Put masks on before leaving vehicles.
 - ☐ Learn about the wellbeing guides and how they will be partnering with greeters and ushers. (See "Enforcing Necessary Health Policies Tip Sheet" for details.)

- ❑ Review the purpose of their service: to make people feel welcomed, seen, supported and safe. With purpose and the health guidelines in mind, walk through any replacement behaviors for your church. Here are some examples:
 - ❑ **Instead of** reaching out to offer a welcome in the form of a handshake, elbow bump or hug, **we will** (wave, bow slightly, or _____) and say ("Welcome! It is great to see you!")
 - ❑ **Instead of** handing out bulletins, **we will** (project on wall/screen; email content; place bulletins on the seats with sanitized hands and masks on prior to people arriving; provide a recycling bin for people to use after worship while maintaining physical distancing)
 - ❑ **Instead of** escorting people to their seat, **we will** (take positions around the sanctuary to direct people from a safe distance)
 - ❑ **Instead of** distributing Communion elements in baskets or trays, or having people come forward to the Communion rail, **we will** follow the Communion Tip Sheet.
 - ❑ **Instead of** passing an offering plate or having people process to place their offering in a basket, **we will** follow the Offering Tip Sheet. (Continue to ask people to give electronically to reduce the amount of paper that others must touch. We will guide others to place their offering in designated secure boxes in the sanctuary.)
- ❑ Think about where you will need to be positioned in the space to allow for proper sightlines, flow, and distancing. For many, this will mean standing back from doorways.
- ❑ Assist the congregation in making sure they have easy access to hand sanitizer, tissues, and, if someone has forgotten to bring one, a mask. The church's Re-entry Task Force should set up and publicize a procedure to assist with the distribution and disposal of these items.
- ❑ In addition to general health guidelines signage, consider additional signage that will help participants feel comfortable and supported in any new behaviors. Keep the information brief and readable at a glance. If the church office does not have the equipment to make signs, investigate having them professionally printed.

Worshipping Outdoors Tip Sheet

The church campus must be prepared to ensure that people comply with physical distancing from the time they enter the property until they leave.

Why?

Some government leaders have “strongly encouraged” outdoor services for those congregations who choose to meet for in-person gatherings during times of high transmission rates. Churches adopting this approach must be able to safeguard those who attend.

When?

As needed. However, churches must be willing and able to follow all the safety and wellness protocols prescribed for indoor worship.

Implementation Checklist:

- ☐ Review all of the physical distancing and other restrictions outlined in the BWC Re-entering Well Guidelines to assure that each of these guidelines will be followed outside.
- ☐ Check to see if your insurance policy has any guidelines or requirements.
- ☐ If churches choose to hold “drive-in worship,” do the following:
 - ☐ Coordinate with local law enforcement or emergency management agencies to ensure compliance with their rules and ordinances.
 - ☐ Organize and train volunteers to direct parking.
 - ☐ Utilize cones, signage, or volunteers to direct attendees to use every other parking spot.
 - ☐ All volunteers, staff and clergy must follow physical distancing.
 - ☐ Any unvaccinated people outside of a vehicle must wear a mask and remain six feet away from any person not in their immediate family.
 - ☐ Utilize cones, signage, or volunteers to block access to playground facilities and other large fields where people may tend to congregate.
 - ☐ A good sound system is essential for outdoor worship. An FM radio format that broadcasts from a stage to people’s car radios may be an option. Test the audio system thoroughly to ensure it will operate as expected.
- ☐ In the event of a personal need that cannot be handled by departing the parking area and returning home, signal a volunteer for guidance. In the event of a medical emergency, please refer to the *Providing Medical Assistance during the COVID-19 Pandemic* Tip Sheet.

- ❑ If weather forces the termination of the outdoor service, it is not permissible to simply move the service inside unless CDC guidelines can be maintained.

Additional Resources:

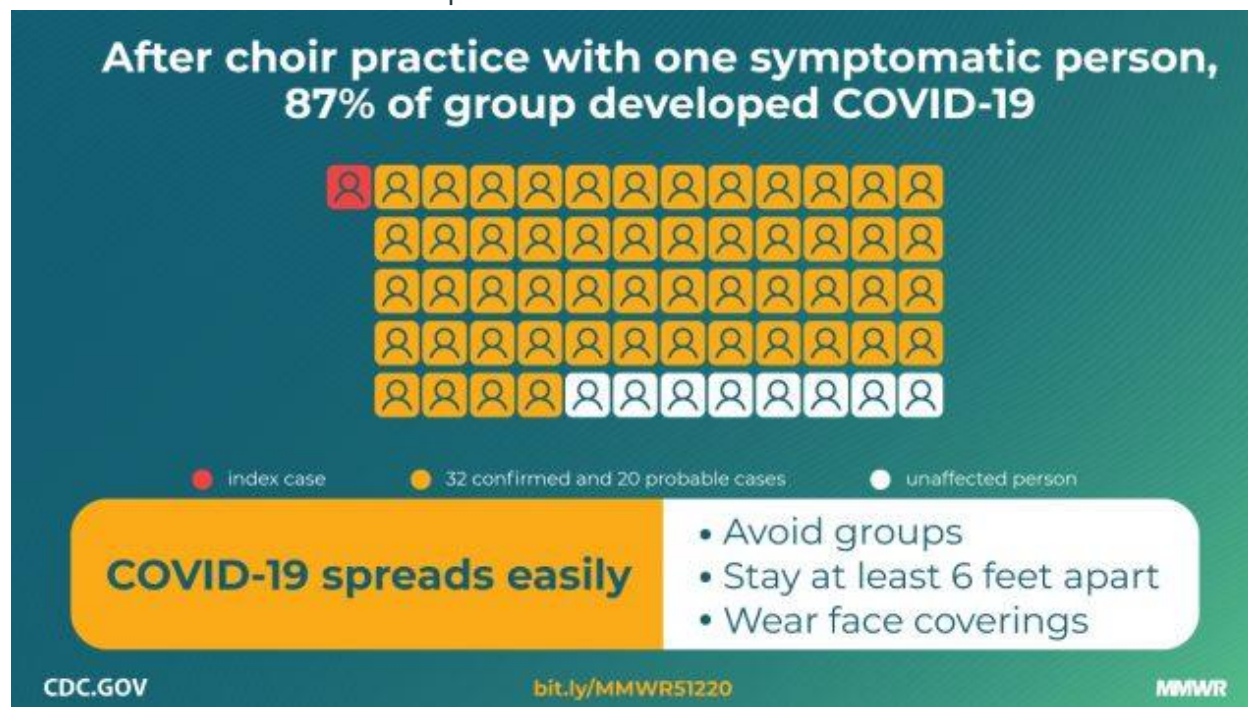
[Safely Host a Drive-in Worship Service by Brotherhood Mutual](#)

Musicians Tip Sheet

In the words of the Ecumenical Consultation of Protocols for Worship, Fellowship, and Sacrament (based at Emory University's UM affiliated Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, a consulting team to the CDC): "The latest CDC guidance for masks and (physical) distancing is for what individuals can do...not what Congregations, in which both vaccinated and unvaccinated people gather together, should do. We are one body in Christ, no more protected than the least protected among us. ... Whenever we gather in groups that may include unvaccinated people, we continue to recommend that all wear masks, that households remain six feet apart, and that congregational and choral singing be avoided indoors." The Association of Teachers of Singing concurred with the Ecumenical Consultation that "congregational singing and congregational choral singing indoors is not recommended at this time, even with vaccination." Their options for worship INDOORS include "soloists or small ensembles of fewer than seven people IF fully vaccinated, physically distanced, and community conditions permit indoor gatherings."

Why?

The risk for droplet transmission is high for unvaccinated choir members, soloists, and musicians playing brass and/or woodwind instruments. Given increased droplet and particle transmission when singing, reports of virus transmission during choir rehearsals/performance, and known difficulties and health risks of singing with a mask, all music production guidelines are still relevant for unvaccinated persons.



When?

Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Virtual Music-Making Considerations

Some considerations for those who are assembling or are thinking of assembling to create music virtually:

- ☐ Guidelines for numbers of people in the sanctuary are determined by local and state governmental directives based on the status of COVID-19 cases in each jurisdiction. Within the BWC, this includes Maryland, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
- ☐ No masks are currently safe for singing. N95 masks must be fit-tested first. They also decrease the singer's oxygen levels due to rebreathing expired carbon dioxide and increasing levels (in the body). This is risky for people with asthma, COPD, and heart disease.
- ☐ Humming, even with a mask, is not a viable alternative to singing normally; aerosolized particles are still released through the nostrils and around the edges of the mask.

Cleaning Instruments Checklist

- ☐ Pianos and organs may be used in worship; however, the musicians must sanitize their hands before and after playing.
- ☐ When cleaning these instruments, please note:
 - ☐ Generally speaking, a soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts.
 - ☐ Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Cleaning pianos is a gentle process not a scrubbing process. Pressing hard or vigorously scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish.
 - ☐ If you use an alcohol-based disinfectant (do not use products containing bleach or citrus) put the disinfectant on the towel, not directly on the piano.
 - ☐ Never leave any liquids on the keys.
 - ☐ Case parts finishes vary greatly and can easily be cleaned by disinfectant wipes and sprays. A soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts. Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels.

Additional Resources

- Resources for Choral Professionals during a Pandemic <https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>
- Singing, the Church and the COVID-19: A Caution for Moving Forward in Our Current Pandemic <https://www.drheathernelson.com/singingandcovid19>
- High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>

Celebrating Communion Tip Sheet

Why?

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is one of two sacraments in The United Methodist Church. (Baptism is the other sacrament.) Preserving the sanctity of this holy ritual while celebrating it during a time of pandemic may be a challenge, but it is one worthy of earnest consideration.

When?

Fully vaccinated people who are no longer required to wear masks may take communion safely. Individuals who are not vaccinated must continue to follow established practices of masking, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. A number of guidelines should be followed to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.

Implementation checklist

- ☐ Purchase prepackaged Communion elements at [Cokesbury](https://www.cokesbury.com/081407011578-fellowship-cup-communion-wafer-juice-250-pack). A reusable chalice is unacceptable when attempting to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. If your congregation is practicing environmental justice, an alternative to single-use kits is to invite parishioners to bring their own Communion elements from home. Have a small supply of pre-packaged elements on-hand for newcomers or those who forget to bring their own bread and juice.
- ☐ Place kits on seats or pews before people arrive.
- ☐ Provide extra prepackaged Communion elements on a separate table so people may take one without touching others' packages (e.g., kits placed 12 inches apart); position the table in such a way that physical distancing is maintained.
- ☐ Provide waste receptacles at the end of each occupied pew so that used Communion elements may be discarded immediately. No one other than the user should touch the used cups. Some participants may choose to take used packaging home for disposal. Those who handle used kits must wear gloves and masks.
- ☐ Facemasks must not be removed or adjusted in order to consume Communion elements unless one is fully vaccinated. Some people may feel vulnerable and choose not to receive Communion in the sanctuary. Invite them to take blessed Communion elements with them and partake in the safety of their homes.



Additional Resources

- To buy prepackaged Communion elements, visit Cokesbury online:
<https://www.cokesbury.com/081407011578-fellowship-cup-communion-wafer-juice-250-pack>

- Watch a video on how to use prepackaged Communion elements:
<https://youtu.be/uAskFnASxTU>

Providing Medical Assistance Tip Sheet

Though you will be communicating to people that they should stay home if they feel ill or if someone at home is sick, you must prepare for the possibility that someone may become ill during a church gathering. Identify a space in the building where an ill individual may be taken until they can safely depart and return home. In the event of any medical emergency, call 911 and administer first aid following updated guidelines.

Why?

We must be prepared to respond faithfully and safely to emergency medical situations that may arise during in person gatherings. Bear in mind that all responses to illness, injury, and/or medical emergencies must be done using masks and gloves and adhering to all guidelines and directives designed to reduce the transmission of this coronavirus.

When?

Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Implementation Checklist

Congregations should think through emergency scenarios ahead of time to be prepared to respond quickly and safely. Among the preparations:

- ☐ Maintain an updated list of congregants who are CPR and first aid certified;
- ☐ Confirm that there are fully-supplied First Aid Kits in strategic locations around the church;
- ☐ If there are too few CPR and First Aid certified congregants to reasonably expect that at least two certified people may be present at each in-person gathering until all restrictions are lifted, identify a group of adults who are willing to become certified. Consider contacting the Red Cross or American Heart Association to set up virtual training sessions through the church;
- ☐ Share this document with those who are CPR and first aid certified;
- ☐ Provide greeters and ushers with an updated list of congregants who are CPR and First Aid certified as they will often be the ones who communicate an emergency;
- ☐ Talk through what to do if someone has a medical emergency during an in-person gathering; acknowledge the compassionate impulse to “run and help” and identify the health-preserving safety reasons for limiting the number of people who respond to an acute illness or health emergency;
- ☐ Establish a space near the sanctuary where someone who becomes ill may be taken during in-person worship. Focus on a space that accommodates the person and those offering First Aid and support; consider the nearest restroom, a classroom, a parlor, etc.;
- ☐ Consider having a wheelchair in the building to assist safe transport to the designated space;
- ☐ Discuss that a non-life-threatening event such as a bad fall with possibly broken bones or a head injury will preclude moving the individual to the designated space. In such

cases, First Aid and assistance will be administered in the sanctuary until an emergency response team responds to the 911 call;

- ☐ Think about the people who will safely help the person experiencing a medical emergency get to the ground or a place where they might be cared for;
- ☐ Identify who will phone 911 and open entrances to facilitate EMT/ambulance team entry;
- ☐ Designate the people who will perform CPR as needed.
 - ☐ If an adult's heart stops, you can still help by performing Hands-Only CPR. (The American Heart Association created guidelines for administering pandemic-specific CPR in April 2020).
 - ☐ Phone 911 and get the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) if available.
 - ☐ Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask or scarf, cloth, etc.
 - ☐ Cover the person's mouth and nose with a face mask or cloth.
 - ☐ Perform hands-only CPR: Push hard and fast on the center of the chest at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. (Hint: think of the tune *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* at a fast pace with compressions on each beat.) Note: More than one person will be needed to administer compressions at this rate; switch out as needed without major interruptions.
 - ☐ Continue until an AED is available and/or emergency medical personnel arrive on site.
- ☐ Establish who will assist surrounding congregants to step back and allow plenty of room to care for the person.

Additional Resources

American Red Cross: [Staying Safe and Helping Others During COVID-19](#)

American Red Cross: [Steps for CPR](#)

Offering and Collections Tip Sheet

Offerings should be collected in secure receptacles near entrances and exits. We advise continued encouragement of electronic offering. A safe method for counting the offering must be implemented including the use of disposable gloves.

Why?

As churches take steps to ensure people's safety and wellbeing, managing expectations will be a vital part of reopening buildings and gathering well. The giving of tithes and offering is an important spiritual discipline. Even when people are not physically together, or when physical distancing adds complications, the act of giving nurtures disciples and churches should enable generosity.

When?

Church leaders should encourage the practice of online giving. Tithing from a distance is a practice that may continue even after the pandemic. In order to care for the most vulnerable, the pastor and church finance leaders should create flexible procedures for collecting tithes and offerings when in-person worship resumes.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Until passing the offering plate is safe for all participants, the Re-entering Well Task Force and church financial leaders should select a location or two in the sanctuary where financial gifts may be deposited. The location and the receptacle should be secure.
- ☐ Recruit and train trusted volunteers to ensure that offering receptacles are not moved and that money is removed only by authorized personnel.
- ☐ Training of these volunteers should include:
 - ☐ Clear information about how the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted and why it is important for everyone to adopt the following protocols:
 - Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has a fever (to prevent the spread of the virus);
 - Maintain six-feet of separation from people not in your immediate family or pod (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom free);
 - Wear a facemask at all times when away from home (to protect others);
 - Do not touch your face, mouth, or eyes (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
 - Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the toilet and use hand-sanitizer to clean hands after exiting the restroom or after touching other common surfaces (to kill the virus).

- ☐ Teach offering/collection stewards how to wear masks properly: cover both nose and mouth and secure a close fit around the face.
 - ☐ If unvaccinated, put masks on before leaving vehicles.
 - ☐ Learn about Wellbeing Guides and how they will be partnering with volunteers. (See “Enforcing Necessary Health Policies Tip Sheet” for details.)
- ☐ Time during worship may be set apart to announce the location of offering receptacles, to encourage people to give, and to thank God for the many blessings we have received. If your church is able to receive offerings or second-mile giving via text or mobile device, create a script with the information and share that information as well.
- ☐ Select a room for counting the offering that is large enough for counters to spread out and allow more than six feet between each person present.
- ☐ Select and train counters; see training instructions above. In addition, counters should adhere to the following:
 - ☐ At least two counters should collect the money immediately following the service.
 - ☐ All counters, and anyone else who comes in contact with the money, should wear disposable gloves before touching the money.
 - ☐ Masks should continue to be worn and physical distancing maintained.
 - ☐ Counters should practice safe glove removal and avoid touching anything with the gloves after counting the money.
 - ☐ Counters should wipe down door handles as they leave the counting room and then wash their hands.
- ☐ The person opening any mailed-in checks to the church should follow the same procedures as the counters.

Coffee Hour and Fellowship Time Tip Sheet

Social/coffee hours may be resumed as restaurants return to full capacity. Food should be served wearing gloves and using utensils rather than offering open table buffets.

Why?

It is in relationship with others and time spent together that Christians grow in love for one another and for God. A time of fellowship before or after worship encourages these relationships. However, if being physically close poses a threat of serious illness, we must respect and love people enough to find other ways of engaging with one another.

When?

One truth has become abundantly clear during the pandemic: the church is not a building. During this time of online congregational gathering, people have discovered the importance of engaging. Coffee hours may resume if your meeting space allows for a safe flow of people in compliance with all local and state guidelines, remembering that unvaccinated people must continue to wear masks and physically distance themselves from others.

Implementation for In-person Coffee/Social Hour Checklist

- ☐ When your gatherings include people who are unvaccinated, you may need to remind participants about adherence to the six-foot rule for distancing. One approach is to tape six-foot lengths on the floors as a visual reminder of the required distance between people. As weather permits, you may consider encouraging people to fellowship outside of the building.
- ☐ The Re-Entering Well Task Force should evaluate the layout of the space where coffee hour will be held.
- ☐ Create a space in which it is easy for people to sit or stand at least six feet from one another. Note how many people may fit in this configuration of the room. If it is not possible to provide a safe space for all participants, consider alternative plans for fellowship such as creatively inviting smaller groups to participate in different areas.
- ☐ Design the gathering space by placing furniture and other objects in locations that visually assist people's understanding of how they should move through the space. Consider having one path into the room and another out of the room.
- ☐ Post clearly visible signs both outside and inside the designated room reminding people to continue practicing physical distancing.
- ☐ Food should be served wearing gloves and using utensils rather than offering open table buffets.

- ☐ Order ample supplies of hand sanitizer, paper towels, napkins, etc., and have them readily available.
- ☐ Thoroughly clean the entire space after every event. That includes all items and surfaces such as tables, chairs, serving trays, bowls, and utensils.

Additional Resources

- Your Health: Small and Large Gatherings, CDC, January 27, 2022
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/gatherings.html>

Nursery and Sunday School Tip Sheet

The risk for transmitting the virus is high for children under the age of 5 as they are still ineligible for vaccine protection. If you are planning on providing these ministries, please carefully read the [CDC Guidelines for Childcare](#).

Why?

The safety and wellbeing of young people is paramount. While the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally shown milder symptoms such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Due to the need for physical closeness and touch in the care of young children, every measure should be taken to prevent them from being in danger of exposure to COVID-19 or exposing others such as Sunday School and nursery staff and volunteers.

When?

Until CDC guidelines are revised.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Inform parents that they are responsible to ensure their unvaccinated children above the age of two are wearing masks and washing their hands as per guidelines. The CDC recommends that children under age two wear no masks because of suffocation risk.
- ☐ Children's sermons may still be delivered; however, children should not be invited to gather unless physical distancing can be maintained between non-family pods.

Checklist for Re-Opening Sunday Schools and Nurseries

One session of the Re-Entering Well Task Force should engage key Christian educators, volunteers, and some older children to make informed decisions and plans for re-opening Sunday School and other children's programming according to CDC, state, county, and public health guidelines. School-age children and youth who have attended in-person school sessions will be familiar with mask-wearing, distancing, and hand-washing. Actively engage their experiences and ideas about measures that have helped them observe safe practices at school. Older children will model safe behaviors for younger ones.

- Plan training sessions for teachers and nursery workers to equip them for safely reopening the nursery and Sunday School. Cover the following topics/questions:
 - How will physical distancing be observed, allowing at least six feet between each student? Visual cues are helpful to children, including tape on floors and chalk marks on sidewalks and driveways for distance-keeping, along with tables and chairs with ribbon, tape, or string to create aisles for lining up. Incorporate special reminders about masks, handwashing, and distance-keeping into lessons and games.
 - How will physical distancing guidelines be enforced? Do more adults need to be added in each classroom?

- How may materials be used and shared in ways that do not risk transmission of the virus?
- Ensure that a significant supply of hand sanitizer is on-hand and remind or help students to wash their hands regularly.
- Develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Most importantly, repeat daily to children and their caregivers: if you feel sick, or not quite right, we'll miss you but please stay home!

Additional Resources

- Example of a Routine for Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting
<https://nrckids.org/files/appendix/AppendixK.pdf>
- Listing of EPA-approved cleaning products
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Schools and Child Care Programs, from the Centers for Disease Control
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open, from the Centers for Disease Control
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>