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The global pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus has kept us away from our normal worship activities for an extended period of time, and many of our members are eager to return to their church buildings.

As a Conference, we have adopted a philosophy of "no lives lost," which solidifies our commitment to the safety of our members. As you return to your churches, it is imperative that you maintain an open mind to the numerous changes that must be instituted to protect you and others from this dangerous virus.

This guide outlines best practices for safety, that if implemented, will reduce the likelihood of transmission among your service attendees.

Our reopening process will be a phased approach. This guide will be accompanied by a reopening sheet, which will outline the activities that are appropriate for each phase of the reopening process.

As the leader of your church, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that these guidelines are followed with fidelity. We recommend that you use the principle of the three "Ds" to guide your reopening strategy:

- **Disinfecting:** Virus can live up to seven (7) days on surfaces. Disinfectants need 2-10 minutes of contact in order to effectively eradicate the virus.
- **Distancing:** Maintain a minimum of 6 ft of distancing between people, and use artificial means of distancing such as masks, face shields, and gloves. Encourage those who are vulnerable or sick to stay home.
- **Diligence:** Implement measures to effectively ensure compliance to the best practices for safety.
**Pre-Entry Building Preparations**

- Conduct a thorough building inspection
- Restart ventilation systems and reset thermostats and lights
- Flush hot and cold water through all points of use in your building if unoccupied for a prolonged period
- Check for rodents/pest activity infestations
- Look for slip, trip and fall hazards
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect buildings and contents by retaining a professional cleaning service
- Post signs around and throughout the building in areas that are highly visible
- Make sure hand sanitizer stations or hand wipes are available throughout the building
- Ensure cleaning supplies are obtained and that there is adequate supply on hand
- Conduct HVAC maintenance
- Use a disinfecting fogging machine to disinfect surfaces
- Remove hymnals, Bibles and other literature from pews

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**COVID - 19 ON SURFACES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>5 - Days</td>
<td>Door knobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woods</td>
<td>4 - Days</td>
<td>Furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stainless Steel</td>
<td>2-3 Days</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard</td>
<td>24 Hours</td>
<td>Shipping boxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>4 Hours</td>
<td>Pennies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum</td>
<td>2-8 Hours</td>
<td>Soda Can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Up to 5 days</td>
<td>Drinking glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics</td>
<td>5 Days</td>
<td>Mugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>2-3 Days</td>
<td>Packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Up to 5 Days</td>
<td>Bulleltin</td>
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PURCHASE SUPPLIES

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

☐ Infrared Thermometers
☐ Contactless Soap Dispenser
☐ Disposable Face Masks
☐ Cleaning Supplies
☐ Contactless Hand Sanitizers Dispenser
☐ Gloves

NICE-TO-HAVE ITEMS

☐ Plexi Glass for Podiums
☐ Disinfecting Fog Machine
☐ Floor Decals
☐ Face Shields
☐ Gowns
☐ UV Light Machines

See CDC Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Supplies

PRE-ENTRY BUILDING PREPARATIONS
The use of visual aids/signs can prove to be an effective way to communicate important information to those who enter our buildings. Important messaging should be included on these signs for the purposes of providing ample notice of what is expected of those who attend our worship services.
PRE-REGISTRATION AND SCREENINGS
**PRE-REGISTRATION PROCESS**

**Inform**
Communicate the pre-registration requirements to church members using multiple means. This should be done a minimum of two weeks prior to reopening. Include pre-registration links within the communication.

**Tools**
Use a questionnaire to ask important questions that will aid in assessing the risk exposure of service attendees. Eventbrite, Evite, Facebook Events or Google forms are also helpful registration platforms.

**Collect Meaningful Data**
Using a pre-registration system will allow you to collect important information (such as the name and contact numbers of service attendees). Info collected will be helpful for identification, isolation and contact tracing if an outbreak occurs at your church.

**Liability Waivers**
Include a liability waiver for members to sign as they complete the pre-registration process.
**TEMPERATURE SCREENINGS**

**Notification**

Use signs and other communication methods to inform service attendees of the temperature screening requirement. This will set the tone as far as their expectations are concerned, making it a lot less difficult when they arrive.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

The volunteers conducting screenings are required to wear the following:
- Face Mask
- Face Shield
- Gown
- Gloves

**Temperature Screenings**

Use an infrared thermometer to check attendees’ temperatures. Those who present with a temperature that exceeds 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius should be asked to worship on another Sabbath.

**Required Personnel**

Ideally the person conducting screenings should be someone with formal training in health care. At a minimum, the individual should have a certification in first aid.
REDUCE THE SPREAD AND PROTECT YOURSELF:

- Stay home if you feel sick (sore throat, diarrhea etc.)
- If you are 65 years or older or have underlying health issues, continue to attend services virtually
- Wear a mask at all times while on the premises
- Maintain a distance of at least 6ft between you and anyone outside of your household
- Sit with your family during services
- Do not engage in any personal contact (hugging, touching, kissing or shaking hands) with other members
- Cooperate with ushers and other volunteers during services
- Take care of your bathroom needs before attending church in order limit visits to the church bathrooms
- If you must use bathrooms, practice safe hand-washing afterwards (minimum of 20 seconds)
- Avoid touching your eyes, face and mouth while attending services
- If you use the restroom, do not touch surfaces with bare hands. The use of gloves or paper towel is strongly recommended
- Temporarily replace the use of water fountains with supplied bottled water.
# COVID-19 Personal Exposure Guide

## Symptoms of COVID-19
- Fever
- Cough
- Colds
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Joint and Muscle Pain

## Have you had Exposure?
- Travelled to other countries in the past 14 days
- Exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 patient
- Travelled to, reside, or work in local areas with reported COVID-19 cases
- Exposure to a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19

## With Exposure + With Symptoms:
- If young (<65 years old), with no other illnesses and mild symptoms: Quarantine at home.
- If elderly (>65 years old), with other illnesses and/or severe symptoms such as shortness of breath or dehydration: Proceed to the Emergency Room for assessment.

## With Exposure + No Symptoms:
- Conduct home quarantine for 14 days and monitor symptoms.
- Should symptoms start to develop, proceed to the Emergency Room for assessment.

## No Exposure + With Symptoms:
- Manage symptoms accordingly. Proceed to the Emergency Room for assessment if you experience dehydration and shortness of breath.
WORSHIP SERVICES
MODIFIED SERVICES

- The duration of services should be modified to reduce the time of in-person gatherings
- Consult state and local restrictions on gatherings and implement measures to ensure compliance
- Schedule 2-3 services, if necessary, ensuring that adequate time is given between services for disinfecting surfaces
- Continue to provide virtual or alternative worship services to vulnerable or high-risk groups.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

- Use RSVP data to plan for the number of service attendees
- Schedule more than one service to ensure compliance with social distancing guidelines
- Organize and encourage small-group involvement among members.
- Dismiss members from the back to the front
- Utilize multiple exit points to avoid build-up of traffic at exit doors
- Use floor decals to set up one-way flow of traffic mechanisms

PRAISE TEAM

- Live praise team performances and congregational singing is suspended until further notice.
- Pre-recorded or virtual group performances are highly preferred
- Instrumental performances are also advisable
- Ensure proper sanitization of musical instruments before use
- Musicians are discouraged from sharing musical instruments
TITHES AND OFFERING

- Encourage those who can to give online
- Offering plates should not be passed from person-to-person
- Utilize stationary receptacles to collect tithes and offerings during services
- Deacons and Counters should wear a mask and gloves at all times while handling funds

MEDIA

- Use disinfecting wipes to clean all surfaces prior to touching equipment
- Limit the number of people in media rooms in order to ensure adherence to social distancing guidelines
- Label microphones to prevent person-to-person sharing
- Use stand-alone microphones where possible
- Use disposable microphone covers
- Disposable mic covers are to be removed by someone wearing a gloves and disposed of after services.
- If services are being live-streamed, be sure to take a shot of the audience for the purposes of contact tracing

VISITORS

- Welcome visitors to service
- Always maintain a supply of masks and provide them to visitors and those who showed up without masks
- Since it is likely that visitors may not have pre-registered for services, it is important that you plan in advance for those who show up to services who are not registered by having a deacon, usher or volunteer on standby to provide information and directions to these visitors
BOARD & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Continue to conduct all meetings virtually
- Ensure that appropriate documentation is being taken at the meetings, especially on matters that are related to how church reopening protective measures will be implemented

"If volunteers and employees have to go to the church in order to use office equipment, please ensure that equipment is disinfected before and after use."

TRANSPORTATION

- Vehicles should be properly disinfected before and after each trip
- Reduce the number of occupants to 25% of capacity
- Windows should remain open (weather permitting) while passengers are on board.
- All passengers MUST wear a mask
- A plastic shield should separate the driver from the passengers
COMMUNIONS

- Limit foot-washing activities to those who live in the same household
- Use pre-packaged communion wafers and juice limiting the touching and interactions between deacons and members
- Arrange for vulnerable members to participate in advance of this planned event

BAPTISMS

- Accept candidates into the local church membership based on profession of faith
- Pastor may complete this activity while wearing an N-95 mask and face shield.

BABY BLESSINGS

- This activity can be conducted while ensuring that there is social distancing taking place among those who are participating
- Use alternative ways of allowing extended family members to show support by standing
- Pastor should wear a mask and face shield while conducting this activity

FUNERAL SERVICES

- Consult with your state and local laws to determine acceptable ways to conduct these services.
- Graveside services are a better alternative
- All recommended social distancing guidelines should be maintained during the service
HOW TO HANDLE AN OUTBREAK

Communicate with Transparency

If someone at your church contracts the Coronavirus, and informs you that they may have exposed other members at your church to the virus, it is important that you communicate this information to those who were present for worship on that day. It is also recommended that you make contact with your local public health organization to provide them with this information and receive directions on how to proceed. You should make every effort to cooperate with these entities as they investigate the events surrounding the outbreak.

Assess
- Assess the extent to which the person infected may have exposed others within your congregation to the virus
- Contact your local health department to get directions on next steps
- Establish a protocol for the closing of churches after outbreak

Communication Tools
- E-mail Blasts
- Video Conference Meeting
- Telephone
- Group Text Messages
LEADERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE

The Pastoral Leadership Team is ultimately responsible for developing mechanisms within the local churches to ensure safety guidelines are being adhered to.

The Safety Officer’s role will also be crucial in providing local leadership with the functional responsibilities related to church safety.

There are two helpful approaches that can be taken in this regard:

- An evaluation tool that will assess the level of compliance by service attendees
- A reporting system for areas of non-compliance

EVALUATION TOOL

The evaluation tool included in Appendix may be used to answer questions specific to the most high-risk activities.

The results of the evaluation should inform the decisions around how compliance will be maintained.

REPORTING SYSTEM

This is a very effective strategy that can assist in allowing every member of the church to have some responsibility in holding each other accountable where safety is concerned.

We urge local pastors to send a message of "if you see something...say something" by reporting actions that will place others at risk. The AEC risk management team will assist the local churches with setting up a centralized reporting system, the local pastors are to be carbon copied on all reports that are being made.

These reports should be sent to: safety@aeceansa.com.
Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in

8 Steps

01. Wash your hands frequently
02. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
03. Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
04. Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
05. Stay at home if you feel unwell
06. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first
07. Get information from trusted sources such as the CDC.gov
08. Wear a face mask or face coverings at all times
State Public Health Department

- District of Columbia Department of Health
- Maryland Department of Health
- Delaware Division of Public Health
- New Jersey Department
- Pennsylvania Department of Health
- Virginia Department of Health
- West Virginia Department of Health

Local Health Departments

- Local Health Departments Directory

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

