Reopening Our Church for In-Person Services

Use this decision tree to help you make an informed decision.

1. Is our church family and local community ready for us to reopen?
   - Have we humbly approached reopening in prayer, Scripture, and best available scientific findings?
   - Is reopening consistent with current state and local orders and recommendations?
   - Have we established a working relationship with appropriate local health authorities?
   - Have we received written consultation from our insurance provider about liability concerns?
   - Do we have a plan for reopening and communication?
   - Will we be able to watch people who are coming into the building for visible COVID-19 symptoms?
   - Are we prepared to ask people not to come to church if they have symptoms or recent exposure to someone with COVID-19?
   - Have we communicated our reopening process with our members and attendees?

   WHEN ‘YES’ TO ALL, MOVE TO STEP 2.

2. Are our staff and volunteers adequately trained for reopening?
   - Do we have a reopening team in place?
   - Have we trained our team in social distancing measures; hygiene practices such as hand washing and face covering; health and safety protocols; all required record keeping practices; cleaning and disinfecting; the process for arrivals, seating, rituals, exits, and apparent illness; and communicating with each other, members, and attendees?
   - Have we clearly assigned responsibilities to people for each aspect of meeting our health and safety requirements?
   - Are we prepared with clear ways to respond to people not following safety protocols?
   - Have we conducted a reopening rehearsal?
   - Try to identify possible challenges or gaps in our plan that need to be addressed before reopening?

   WHEN ‘YES’ TO ALL, MOVE TO STEP 3

3. Is our facility ready to meet all health and safety requirements?
   - Has our building been disinfected and cleaned, and are there procedures for ongoing cleaning and safe disinfectant use?
   - Does our building ventilation system meet current health requirements?
   - Do we have isolation space for people who appear to be (or become) ill and a plan for transport home or to a medical facility?
   - Are social distancing measures for seating, etc. clearly marked, explained, and enforced?
   - Do we have masks, tissues, sanitizer, no-touch trash, and signage to promote preventive actions?

   WHEN ‘YES’ TO ALL, MOVE TO STEP 4

4. Are we able to monitor and adapt to changing needs or requirements?
   - Do we monitor reliable information sources and have a process for addressing changing circumstances?
   - Have we communicated to our members and attendees our current operating plan and criteria that would require them to stay home if they are concerned, ill, or at high risk?
   - Do we have alternative worship options for concerned and higher risk individuals?
   - Do we have a plan for continued at-home support and care for those who are distancing, high risk, or become ill?
   - Have we established regular monitoring and emergency health authority contacts (in case of possible COVID-19 exposure)?

   WHEN YOU HAVE ADDRESSED THESE QUESTIONS, MOVE FORWARD WITH REOPENING.

Resources to Guide and Support Along the Way

For a free 26-page guide on church reopening, checklist, tip sheets, articles, and disclaimer: [www.reopeningthechurch.com](http://www.reopeningthechurch.com)

To facilitate spiritual and emotional care from a biblical, research-based perspective visit: [www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com](http://www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com)

For more on how to begin a master’s degree in Humanitarian and Disaster Leadership or a Trauma Certificate at Wheaton College Graduate School: [www.wheaton.edu/HDL](http://www.wheaton.edu/HDL)