



Guidelines for Preparing to return to church

Ripped from the Headlines

Ex-official
faces charges
of pilfering

charged in fraud

Fake
in city

One German church service resulted in more than 100 coronavirus infections

It highlights the risks of allowing group events that can accelerate rapid spread of the virus.

By Zeeshan Aleem | @ZeeshanAleem | Updated May 24, 2020, 9:31pm EDT

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CORONAVIRUS

This Central Kentucky church reopened on May 10 and became a COVID-19 hot spot

BY ALEX ACQUISTO

JUNE 05, 2020 04:16 PM , UPDATED JUNE 06, 2020 11:18 AM



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After reopening its doors, coronavirus cases force Ringgold church to go back online



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A person who tested positive for COVID-19 attended a crowded church service, potentially exposing 180 people

BY CAITLIN O'KANE

MAY 18, 2020 / 12:12 PM / CBS NEWS







Coronavirus outbreak: Ontario allows groups of 10, places of worship to reopen starting June 12

On Monday, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced that many regions in Ontario will be able to enter Stage 2 of Phase 2 of the province's reopening plan on June 12, which includes increasing limits on social gatherings to 10 people, and allowing places of worship to reopen at 30 per cent capacity.



"The province is going to be challenged with institutions which bring people together, they will have to be exceedingly careful about the potential risks for vulnerable people being exposed in a confined environment, such as entranceways and gathering points within the premises. There are also inherent risks around religious practices, such as singing"

Dr. Charles Gardner,

Medical Officer of Health with the Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit

London-area Catholic diocese plans to reopen, has no set date

Free Press staff

1 hour ago • 1 minute read





Be Prepared

Re-opening your church building is a far more complex task than closing your building ever was..

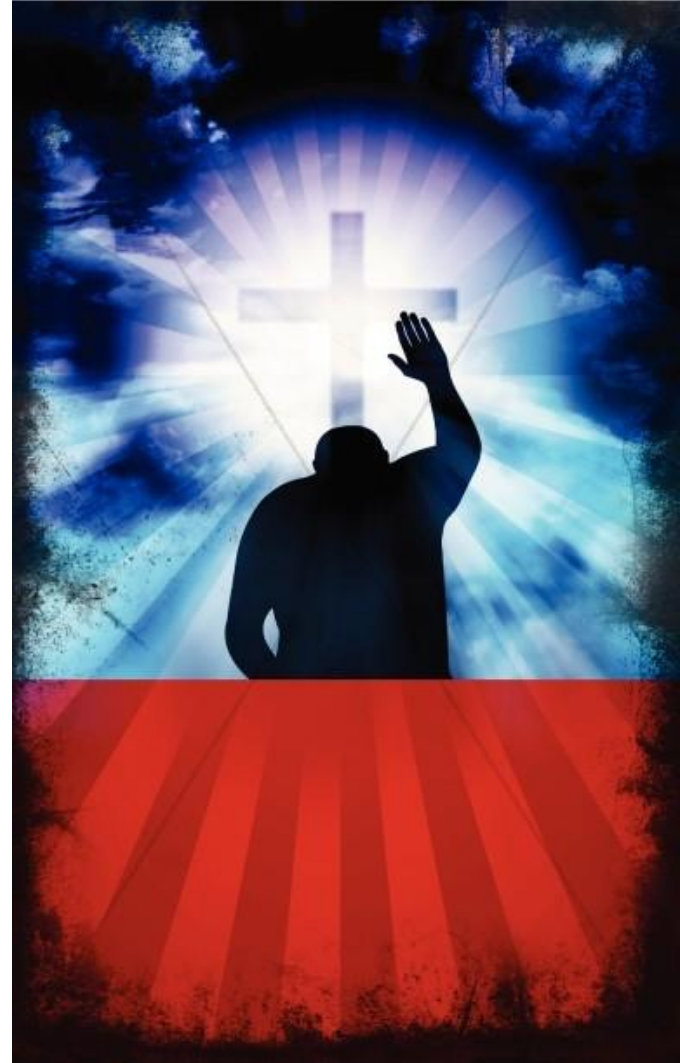
Preparation Phase

June 8th-30th

Returning to in-person worship will require a phased-in approach.

Preparation Phase goals:

- ▷ **Create Confidence** in the congregation as plans are made to return to church.
- ▷ **Identify Challenges** that would hinder bringing worshipers back safely.
- ▷ **Get Comfortable** with the new normal.



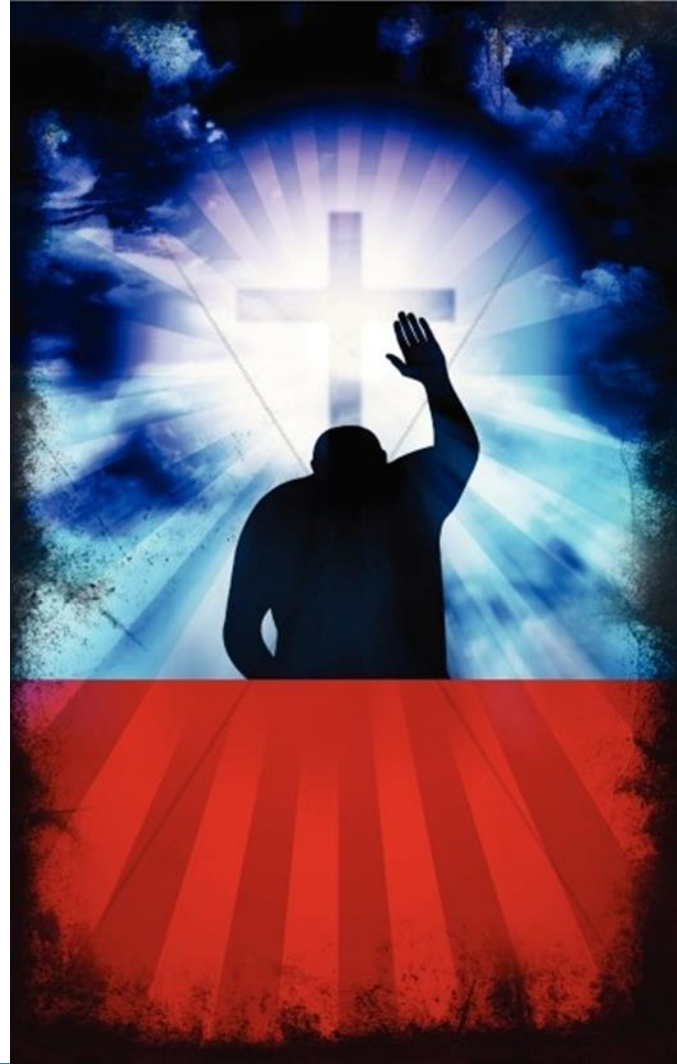
Preparing the People

- ☐ Ensure facility has adequate amounts of masks and gloves for attendees and volunteers (particularly greeters & cleaners).
- ☐ Plan an online session to review hygiene, cleaning/disinfecting practices that will be expected upon return.
- ☐ Develop plans for changing worship logistics to ensure safety of attendees (e.g. offering, communion).
- ☐ Develop protocol for ushers & greeters that would allow for social distancing. You may consider new roles for volunteers in high-risk categories.
- ☐ Create a trial phase to document and practice communications, processes & procedures that will ensure safety when in-person worship is initiated, learning what is and is not effective.
- ☐ Publish your local guidelines for anyone on church property. Monitor understanding and adherence to guidelines among members. Identify any needed guideline or process remediation.



Preparing the Space

- ❑ Ensure 3-month supply of cleaning/sanitizing products. Have a system in place to reorder items before they are depleted.
- ❑ Eliminate places to congregate (e.g. store chairs). Thoroughly sanitize all surfaces, especially those in high-traffic areas.
- ❑ Develop congregational seating plan for social distancing. Ensure at least a 2 meter distance.
- ❑ Develop protocol for sanitizing to take place before and after service and in real-time during worship.
- ❑ Walk through each step of in-person worship multiple times. Follow signage, communications & directions that will be provided to worshipers. Refine as needed.



FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

PARKING LOTS

- ☐ Check and clean all entrances
- ☐ Clean all debris from parking areas
- ☐ Check striping and directional arrows, repaint as needed
- ☐ Check all signage and repair as needed
- ☐ Patch any cracks or holes, especially along walkways
- ☐ Check all parking lot lighting, replace/repair as needed
- ☐ Inspect all accessible parking and routes.

EXTERIOR LANDSCAPING

- ☐ Clean all debris as necessary
- ☐ Check operation of all irrigation, repair as necessary
- ☐ Schedule irrigation back-flow preventer inspection (if necessary)
- ☐ Trim all trees and plantings, especially around entrances, and walkways
- ☐ Refresh all flower beds
- ☐ Inspect all exterior signage, repair and replace as necessary
- ☐ Check operation of any landscape lighting, repair/replace as needed

FACILITY EXTERIOR

- ☐ Check all entrances, remove any collected debris
- ☐ Check operation of all exterior doors, lubricate all hardware as needed
- ☐ Clean, replace, or add entrance matting as needed
- ☐ Check all exterior facility lighting, repair/replace as needed
- ☐ Ensure any pest control stations are still operational
- ☐ Inspect and clean all awnings (if applicable)
- ☐ Inspect porte-cochere (drive-thru's), clean as necessary

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

FACILITY EXTERIOR (cont.)

- ☐ Clean and sanitize all playgrounds, exterior children's areas
- ☐ Check all fencing, repair as required. Lubricate all gates and locks
- ☐ Inspect dumpster storage area, clean as necessary
- ☐ Clean all exterior glass. Check all seals and caulking
- ☐ Repair/repaint all trim as needed
- ☐ Inspect all fire and emergency exit pathways/routes
- ☐ Check all downspout discharge areas, ensure they are clear of debris

GAS

- ☐ Check all gas appliances for proper operation, re-light as necessary
- ☐ Inspect gas meter(s), visual inspection only. If anything appears incorrect, contact utility company
- ☐ Run all gas appliances for a typical cycle before you allow operations to resume

ROOFS

- ☐ Walk, inspect the roof and repair any area required and remove debris as necessary
- ☐ Check operation of all drains, gutters, scuppers, and downspouts

PLUMBING & WATER

- ☐ In restrooms, check all fixtures and run/flush/let them run for a bit
- ☐ Ensure all fill valves and flappers function, replace as necessary
- ☐ Empty and clean ice makers. Let them fill one time, dump the ice, then refill
- ☐ Inspect any back-flow preventer valves in the facility (if applicable)
- ☐ Pour at least 2 liters (8.5 cups) of water down every active floor drain

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

ELECTRICAL

- ☐ Inspect all panels for tripped breakers. Investigate. tripped breakers for cause, resolve issue, reset breaker
- ☐ Take a section of the facility at a time to restore power/turn-on equipment/reset power strips
- ☐ Inspect all GFCI outlets/circuits for correct operation
- ☐ Inspect all automatic doors, low-voltage operators
- ☐ Inspect extension cords in use for proper gauge, condition, and necessity. Replace as required

HVAC

- ☐ Inspect all exterior components. Clean coils, remove any debris, check for proper operation of electrical disconnect, and ensure suction line insulation is intact
- ☐ Inspect interior components. Replace filters as required, check the piping for the over-flow pan, ensure disconnects function, and inspect coil (if applicable)
- ☐ Operate all the HVAC equipment in both modes to ensure proper equipment operation and control operation

HVAC (cont.)

- ☐ Inspect back-flow preventer valves (if applicable)
- ☐ Clean all HVAC supply vents in the facility
- ☐ Check belts for proper tension/condition. Ensure spares are available for all equipment
- ☐ Set correct temperatures at all units

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

LIFE SAFETY

- ☐ Inspect AED pads and equipment. Check dates and ensure spare pads and batteries are present
- ☐ Inspect all first-aid supplies, especially dates, replace as required
- ☐ Check all portable fire extinguishers (monthly inspections)
- ☐ If applicable, check firefighter operation of elevator(s)
- ☐ Check all emergency exit signs and lighting for proper operation. Replace fixtures/batteries as required

LIFE SAFETY (cont.)

- ☐ Inspect any foodstuffs in the facility for condition and date range
- ☐ Inspect all flashlights and any other emergency operations materials
- ☐ Check operation of all locking systems
- ☐ Inspect fire, intrusion alarms, sprinkler systems for proper operation. Will require a licensed company to perform

VEHICLES

- ☐ Ensure registration on all motor vehicles and trailers is current
- ☐ Ensure all insurance on motor vehicles and trailers is current
- ☐ Check all fluids (washer, oil, transmission, etc.)
- ☐ Check tires, replace/rotate as required
- ☐ Inspect wipers, window seals and gaskets. Replace as required
- ☐ Check all lights for proper operation, replace as required

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

VEHICLES (cont.)

- ☐ Drive all motor vehicles to ensure proper operation prior to taking on passengers
- ☐ Ensure all first-aid and safety supplies are in vehicles. This includes a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, safety cones, spare fuses, jumper cables, flashlight, etc

FACILITY INTERIOR

- ☐ Ensure proper operation of all space lighting
- ☐ Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all tables and chairs, paying attention to the underside of each
- ☐ Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all toys
- ☐ Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all “high touch” areas. This can include keyboards, phones, door hardware, elevator call buttons, handrails, water fountains, bathroom partition hardware, backs of chairs/pews, offering plates, touchscreens, badge printers, etc.

FACILITY INTERIOR (cont.)

- ☐ Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all trash receptacles, changing tables, cribs, and the walls in children’s areas, between 45cm-81cm (18"-32") off the floor
- ☐ Inspect all spaces to ensure they are clean and in good condition.
- ☐ Run your HVAC system or open windows to allow for a fresh air exchange prior to occupation

FACILITY RE-OPENING CHECKLIST

WORSHIP AREAS

- ☐ Condition the space and have pianos tuned as required
- ☐ Inspect/check lighting system, to include the dimmers and theatrical lighting (as applicable)
- ☐ Inspect/check sound system for proper operation
- ☐ Inspect/check all AV equipment for alignment, focus, and operation
- ☐ If possible, perform a tech run-through at least a week prior to the onset of services
- ☐ Perform additional dusting and cleaning on the seating areas

WORSHIP AREAS (cont.)

- ☐ Fill and perform a function check on the baptistery (as required)
- ☐ Check pews/seating for all required envelopes, inserts, and hymnals. Determine if they stay or if they go

GENERAL

- ☐ Ensure all custodial supplies and equipment are clean, stocked, and available (to include consumables).
- ☐ Ensure all maintenance, custodial, and supply closets/rooms are cleaned and organized
- ☐ Remove all unnecessary items from the property
- ☐ Walk entire property prior to allowing operations to fully commence. Check all areas (including the exterior) and perform a final visual check for any items out of place or requiring adjustment

A long, straight asphalt road stretches from the foreground towards the horizon, flanked by green fields. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and a bright light source, likely the sun, is visible near the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The road has a white dashed line down the center.

Looking



Ahead

Initial Return to In-Person Worship

CHECKLIST: The church is ready to return to a version of in-person worship when:

- ☐ The federal and provincial governments have granted permission.
- ☐ The church has a dedicated team which reviews the church's compliance to federal/provincial and local protocols and agrees upon any necessary exceptions.
- ☐ Church is in compliance with federal/provincial and local orders regarding distancing, gathering & sanitation (including the ability to sanitize common areas before, during, and after worship).
- ☐ The church is properly staffed with the trained volunteers/lay people necessary to regulate and enforce federal/provincial and local orders regarding distancing, gathering & sanitation (incl. seating, mask wearing, bathroom occupancy, opening/closing doors, parking).
- ☐ The church can provide reasonable accommodation to allow for comfortable worship while still complying to social distancing requirements (for example: clearly marked areas, large spaces for families, special seating for high risk individuals, etc.)
- ☐ The church has a clear, proactive communication strategy to ensure congregants are aware of current practices and safety/wellness protocols (e.g email, website, social media, signage at the church).





Looking

Building Your Game Plan

Critical Success Factors for Returning to Church



Be Prepared

PREPARE NOW FOR HOLDING ADDITIONAL
WORSHIP SERVICES, IF NEEDED.

Sabbath Service Options

- ☐ Rotating in person attendance by for example alphabet (other members attend online)
- ☐ Holding multiple services
- ☐ Continue to hold services online
- ☐ Small group meetings in homes



Cleaning Supplies

Prep

- ☐ Have we prepared a document detailing the cleaning processes in place and the chemicals used to help alleviate concerns of those returning to the facility?
- ☐ Have we updated my Hazardous Communication Plan and Safety Data Sheets with any new chemicals?
- ☐ Have we purchased all the supplies needed to adequately cover the increased cleaning plan?
- ☐ Have we trained the team, and are we prepared to schedule them accordingly, to cover the cleaning needs?
- ☐ Do we have what is needed to quickly clean and sanitize “high-touch” areas and do we have the proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and protocols in place for any body-fluid clean-up?





Be Prepared

ENFORCE NEW PROCESS WITH EQUIPMENT, SIGNAGE,
AND SUPPLIES

Signage

- ☐ Signage for where visitors can ask questions
- ☐ Markers on the floor reminding occupants how far 2 meters apart is
- ☐ Signage in elevator bays limiting the number of people on an elevator or where occupants should stand in an elevator, so they are 2 meters apart
- ☐ Notices of which doors should be entrance only and which should be exit only to keep social distance
- ☐ Signage directing building occupants which ways to go to get in and out of the building (think single flow of traffic at grocery store)

TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

THANKS FOR CARING



THANKS FOR CARING

TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER



Be Prepared

HAVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
(PPE) ON HAND.

Space Considerations

- ☐ Have we thought through the areas we really do not need (for reduced operations) and cordoned them off so we do not have to re-clean them?
- ☐ Have we considered having a means by which we can indicate when a room has been cleaned last?
- ☐ Have we considered not offering any prepared beverages or snacks to avoid the additional cleaning requirements and to help avoid body-fluid transfer? Perhaps provide bottled water, if necessary.
- ☐ Do we need to remove seating groupings in the shared area to help avoid clustering?
- ☐ Have we considered removing all non-essential tables and info stands from public areas to reduce contact surfaces and perhaps run announcements on a TV or monitor?





Be Prepared

BE SPECIFICALLY PREPARED TO ADDRESS
THE NEEDS OF SENIOR ADULTS.

Access Points

- ☐ Can we invest in automatic door openers to assist in more of a touchless experience? Perhaps add proximity sensors to the doors or designate, a single volunteer to push the opener for individuals.
- ☐ Can we add door kick downs (type of door stop) or hold open devices on other common use (restrooms and worship area) doors? The more we can limit touching of doors the better.
- ☐ Is there a possibility to utilize trained volunteers, with the proper Personal Protection Equipment, to open and close doors for all that enter?
- ☐ Do we have a plan to limit clustering in the foyer/lobby/fellowship hall/etc.?
- ☐ Do we have rovers (i.e. volunteers that rove the building to ensure people aren't gathering in larger groups, keeping safe distances, following entrance/exit paths properly)





Be Prepared

RE-TRAIN YOUR WELCOME MINISTRY
VOLUNTEERS.

Seating

- ☐ With pews or theater seats, how can we visually show recommended social distancing? If moveable seating, can we remove some of them and increase spacing?
- ☐ If additional large meeting areas are available, can we simulcast to those spaces as well as provide appropriate social distance considerations?
- ☐ Do we have a plan for cleaning and disinfecting seating and high-touch areas, especially between multiple services?
- ☐ Do we know our total occupancy, and do we have a way to count attendance and limit numbers when necessary?
- ☐ Can we have sign-ups or registrations for service times to ensure we do not have to turn folks away at the door? A screening questionnaire should be sent to each RSVP.





Be Prepared

PROVIDE MEMBERS TOTAL CLARITY ABOUT
HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN RETURN INITIALLY.

Children

- ☐ What standards and guidelines has our province or local municipality put in place for public schools and daycare facilities? We may want to follow the same. Enforce Well child policy.
- ☐ While this may be a tough pill, we may need to not open our children's areas initially.
- ☐ If we do open them, consider how to address line ups and check-in stations, we may need to wipe them down after every check-in, requiring additional volunteers.
- ☐ What process can we put in place to limit the amount of touching from parents to our workers? What are our established plans if a child or family member presents signs of an illness? Will we be able to safely take a temperature reading if necessary?
- ☐ Have we procured, trained in their use, and provided additional Personal Protection Equipment and cleaning supplies to our volunteers?



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Well Child Policy

- ☐ No fever over 37.6 Celsius currently or within the last 24 hours.
- ☐ No vomiting or diarrhea currently or within the last 24 hours.
- ☐ No runny nose.
- ☐ No cough.
- ☐ No unexplained rashes.
- ☐ No skin infections.
- ☐ No eye infections.
- ☐ No childhood diseases such as chicken pox, mumps, measles, etc.

If a child has any of the above symptoms they should not be permitted in the program and the parent(s) should be advised to take the child home or to seek medical attention. If a child develops any of the above symptoms while in our care ask the parent(s) to pick up the child immediately and to seek medical attention.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Be Prepared

HAVE SHORTER WORSHIP SERVICES AT THE
ONSET.

Operations (cont.)

- ☐ Have we thought through how to welcome folks yet still encourage distancing?
- ☐ Pew hymnals, Bibles, tithe envelopes, connection cards, prayer request cards, etc. Should be removed?
- ☐ Create and Implement a plan to monitor new procedures. Create reports to measure your success (I.e. logging incidents with a COVID-19 incident type). Enable feedback loops from tenants, vendors, and building staff. Monitor questions from members, guests and tenants to ensure your new procedures are clear
- ☐ Prevent a rush for the exits, during which social distancing won't be feasible. Our members will naturally enter the sanctuary in a more staggered manner as they arrive. Help them exit similarly. Exit by sections; ex. back to front



Operations

- ☐ If providing offering boxes, do we have safe money handling procedures (from a medical view) in place?
- ☐ For the worship team, will we designate microphones for everyone? Do we have enough microphones for a 1 to 1 assignment?
- ☐ What is our plan to limit exposure for individuals leading worship? Will we have designated areas for them to stand to keep safe distances?
- ☐ Should we suspend the use of a choir and choir loft?
- ☐ Do we have a plan for how to address baptism, communion, baby dedications, right hand of fellowship etc.?
- ☐ Will our tech services team wear Personal Protective Equipment when handling, operating equipment? If not, do we have a plan to sanitize after each use?





Be Prepared

DECIDE HOW YOU WILL CONTINUE USING
YOUR DIGITAL/STREAMING WORSHIP
SERVICES.

Guidance from the Conference Office

| Item | Guidance |
|---|--|
| Potlucks, Socials and Other Group Meals | Remain suspended until further notice. |
| Hand to Hand Contact | Ensure minimal hand-to-hand contact between people, by propping open doors, skipping greeting time during services (no hand shaking or hugging), and placing offering buckets in central locations instead of passing from person-to-person. |
| Sabbath School | Close up discussions should be avoided, Sabbath School to continue online, if class must be held in person it should be led from the pulpit as one class. |
| Worship Service & Evening Activities | Limit preliminaries and platform participants, condense the worship service to no longer than 2 hours total, suspend evening meetings such as AY and Bible class. Evening meetings may continue online. |
| Prayer Meeting | Additional church activities, such as prayer meetings, choir practices, etc. remain suspended, but may be continued online. |

Guidance from the Conference Office

| Item | Guidance |
|---|--|
| Overnight Trips & Mission Trips | Remain suspended until further notice. |
| Facility Access by Non-church Groups | Remain restricted, considered on a case by case basis. |
| Isolation | Identify an area to separate anyone who begins to exhibit COVID like symptoms during the service. |
| Congregational Singing | It is recommended to suspend congregational singing since the virus is spread through respiratory droplets. If continuing with congregational singing increase physical distancing to a minimum of 3 meters (10 feet) between groups and ensure face coverings are worn. |
| How to Manage Potential Volunteers Deciding to Stay Home | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify volunteers who may decide to continue worshiping online.• Identify the critical volunteer duties and cross train for those duties.• Identify two people who can assume those duties in a volunteer's absence to add two layers of contingency |

Guidance from the Conference Office

| Item | Guidance |
|--|--|
| Touchless Forehead Thermometers | Consider before entry, quickly taking attendees temperatures to ensure they are not running a fever. |
| Well Child | For the protection of the children and families in our children's ministry, enforce the Well Child Policy. |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Drive in Church Services

- ☐ The use of an FM transmitter to broadcast your in-car service is required, PA systems set up with speakers are not permitted.
- ☐ Broadcast your service several hundred feet in all directions. Unlimited users.
- ☐ Have your members park in the parking lot and remain in their vehicles 2 meters apart.
- ☐ Select an FM frequency that is currently not in use.
- ☐ Plug the FM Transmitter into your AV audio output.
- ☐ The FM Transmitter will broadcast the service to each members' car radio.
- ☐ Your members only need to tune into the open FM station you selected to hear the service.



Drive in Church Services cont.

- ☐ You can use a sandwich board or other signage throughout the parking lot to direct listeners to the right station.
- ☐ Ensure that members remain in their vehicles and recommend they are only with family members they live with.
- ☐ Restrooms should be only available in the event of an emergency and must be thoroughly sanitized before, during, and after service. Ensure there are no more the five persons (including the worship team) in the building at any one time and physical distance is maintained.
- ☐ The use of lawn chairs etc. during service will not be permitted; and materials cannot be passed between participants or the individuals performing the service.
- ☐ You must inform your local police station of your intentions.



Drive in Church Services cont.

- ☐ It is important to note that any FM transmitter used by your church is to be no more than one (1) watt.

Should your church decide to pursue this option, you are asked to consider the following:

- ☐ 1. The ultimate decision in consultation with the local police, rests with the local church board, all guidelines should be explained and thoroughly discussed before the decision is made.
- ☐ 2. Every other parking spot is to be used, estimate if the parking lot is large enough to allow distancing, and how you will handle things once the lot is full?
- ☐ 3. Your board action and plans must be submitted to Executive Secretary and Risk Management offices for review.
- ☐ Please see the official Conference COVID-19 Drive-In Worship Service Guidelines for full details.



Sabbath Safety

- ❑ Assign roles- In an emergency, determine who will call 911, who will talk to authorities, and who will talk to the media. Assign backups for each role.
- ❑ Identify trained professionals within the membership- Look for trained medical professionals, current or former law enforcement officers, and members with military or security backgrounds.
- ❑ Invest in two-way radios- Two-way radios eliminate spotty cell service and scrambling to locate a list of internal phone numbers. Ushers, Deacons etc. equipped with two-way radios can relay information quickly throughout your building or campus.
- ❑ Create a single entrance into the church- Assign an usher or team member to lock doors once your service starts. Any unlocked doors should be actively monitored. All other entrances should be inaccessible from the outside of your church. Ensure that the exit doors remain unlocked from the inside. Ensure the parking lot is also monitored throughout the service.
- ❑ Monitor the cameras- Have someone monitor the security cameras.



Sabbath Safety for Greeters

- ☐ Greet everyone.
- ☐ Look for people you don't recognize.
- ☐ Sincerely look directly in the eye of everyone walking through the door.
- ☐ Offer your name and see if they offer theirs.
- ☐ Don't just be punctual, be early.
- ☐ Give every person the same warm treatment.
- ☐ Train volunteers to Look for:
 - ☐ Indicators of unusual emotion.
 - ☐ Unusual behavior.
 - ☐ Clothing out of place for the weather.



If a COVID-19 suspect or confirmed case is found within the premises



The unwell person should be immediately shifted to a safe and isolated area.

He/she to be given a face cover before the doctor arrives for examination.

Call the nearest hospital, clinic or the state/district helpline number.

A designated public health authority will undertake risk assessment and decide further course of action such as need for disinfection, etc.

If the person turns out to be COVID-19 positive, the premises has to be disinfected immediately.





Be Prepared

MAKE RE-ENTRY A MAJOR EVENT.