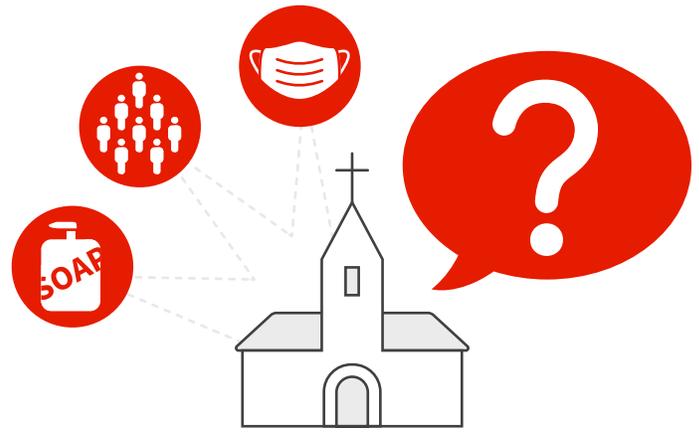


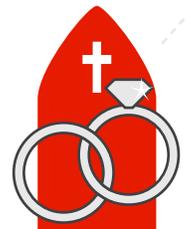
Questions Your Church Should Answer Before Gathering Again



The last few months have been an unprecedented period for the church as the vast majority of churches worldwide have been closed to public gatherings. As you begin to consider when and how to re-open your facilities, you'll need to deal with a number of issues you've never engaged before as a church family. The following questions represent things every church should consider before their first worship service. This list isn't exhaustive, but it should get you thinking about the most significant issues.

General

- Have you read and discussed with your church leadership your state's guidelines for re-opening? (Note particularly what the guidelines say about timing, types of gatherings allowed, social-distancing guidelines, capacity, and cleaning recommendations.)
- Have you read through any available denominational guidance on re-opening churches in your area?
- How will you communicate with your church family the steps you're taking to safely re-open?
- What will you communicate with the elderly and other vulnerable populations about how they should participate in the service in order to stay particularly safe? How will you communicate this in a way that doesn't further isolate them?
- Do you have volunteers who may be able to make additional facemasks for your church's use?
- Have you surveyed your church community about their expectations upon returning to the worship service?
- What will you do with on-campus aspects of your church ministry other than worship services, such as Bible studies, small groups, service ministries, etc.?
- How will you handle special events like weddings and funerals and how will you communicate those changes to the church family?
- Are there ways you can share the successes of the quarantine period in terms of your church's mission and values so you can build upon them?
- Will you need any new staff positions or to reorganize staff responsibilities to manage new ministries developed during the quarantine period?



Worship Service

- Are you continuing digital ministry solutions for people who don't feel comfortable attending in-person gatherings?
- How will your church set up chairs or pews for your worship service to maintain social-distancing guidelines (both concerning space between people and capacity issues)?
- What will you do with coffee/snack stations or other spots that encourage gathering on your campus?
- Will you have any kind of meet and greet time during your service? How will you do this without handshakes?
- Will you have greeters and how will you train your greeters to engage guests without handshakes and maintaining other social-distancing measures?
- Are there any new hospitality practices your church needs to adopt to make people feel welcome while maintaining social-distancing guidelines?
- Will you open public bathrooms?
- Do you have access to large enough quantities of hand sanitizer that you can make it available for your worship gatherings?
- Do you have access to facemasks that you can provide for guests that do not have them?
- If your state requires you to keep your attendance (or capacity percentage at a certain level), how will you count people? What will you do if you begin to reach that capacity?
- Will you need to host more services in order to minister to an equivalent number of people during weekend services? How will you ensure people attend those services at relatively equal levels? Will you have some kind of sign-up process for those services?
- How will you staff additional services with volunteers?
- Will you need to shorten the services in order to allow an orderly and safe transition time between services?
- If your church has an altar or counseling location where you encourage people to come and talk with a pastor, how will you handle that situation in a manner consistent with social-distancing recommendations?
- How will you handle the Eucharist/Communion/the Lord's Supper in a way that is consistent healthy practices? Can you provide single-serve elements so trays do not need to be passed?
- How will you handle baptisms and other "high-touch" church practices?
- How will your church's worship team handle social distancing on stage?
- Will you encourage corporate singing?
- Who will be responsible (either between services or on a weekly basis) for cleaning instruments and other devices used for public worship?
- Is your church's mobile app set up to provide many of the necessary resources that you might typically hand out through paper (connection card, bulletins, etc.) so you can limit COVID-19 spread during your gathering?
- If your church has typically provided "pew Bibles" to guests, can you provide a Bible on your mobile app to cut down on cleaning time between services?
- What are you doing to publicly mark or celebrate your church's first public service?



Cleaning

- How will you clean and sanitize the building before the first service? (For more information about cleaning your facilities, check out [these recommendations](#) from the Center for Disease Control.)
- Have you gathered the needed supplies for a thorough cleaning of the building?
- If you have multiple services, do you have a plan for cleaning between services?
- How will you handle the weekly thorough cleaning of the building?
- Do you need to add more cleaning volunteers to your team?
- Who on staff will be responsible to ensure cleaning happens on a regular basis?



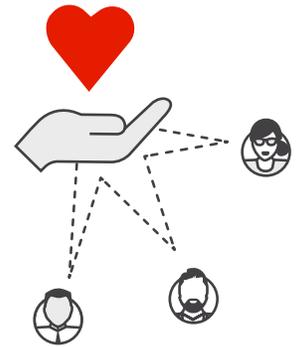
Children

- Will your church continue to offer children's church when you return?
- If your church does not offer children's programming, will you have any online or family-based discipleship materials for children?
- Will you offer any pencil-and-paper activities for younger children during your worship service?



Volunteers

- If you rely on volunteers to staff your worship service (greeters, children's ministry, parking attendants, etc.), what will you do if the number of those volunteers drops significantly?
- If ministries need to function with smaller numbers of volunteers in order to deal with capacity issues in rooms (or the church as a whole), how will you deal with the change in workflow?
- What will you do to protect the most vulnerable volunteers to the COVID-19 pandemic (the elderly, those with pre-existing conditions, etc.)? Are there certain volunteering situations you'll steer them away from? Are there situations you'll steer them toward? How will you manage those potentially difficult conversations (particularly if the volunteer is reluctant to take a break from a long-standing volunteer role)?
- Will there be any new volunteer positions you'll need to maintain new cleaning guidelines and other changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic?



Giving

- Do you have an easy-to-use digital giving solution so that your church community can give without "passing the plate" (which can be an easy way to spread COVID-19 and other similar viruses)?
- What will you do to make it easier for people to give digitally?
- Do you have a way for people to give, who don't give digitally and doesn't require passing the plate?
- What is your budgeting plan if it takes longer for giving to return to normal?

