

7 Implications for the Church in a post-COVID-19 World

Nate Tatman

Started: March 22, 2020

Updated: May 4, 2020

In an article by the [National Review](#), Scott Gottlieb, the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner stated, *“This virus has changed the course of history...The gravity of what this virus is going to mean to society for the next two years can’t be overstated, in my view...”*

Gottlieb is not the only person who shares this sentiment. Commentary from most experts express the same thought. If the experts believe this to be true, then there are tremendous implications for our society and culture. We can expect everything to change in how we shop, work, vacation, and conduct our leisure time.

This will also bring changes to our churches. Some may seem insignificant (amount of people allowed into a building) while others will seem overbearing (proof of vaccination), and there are many factors in between.

This document identifies several implications that need to be processed by churches ministering in a post-COVID19 society. Intentionally left off this list are economic implications. The primary purpose of this document is to help churches stay in lockstep with their communities and cities so that they can act or respond appropriately. It should be a discussion starter for pastors and leaders as they identify creative and innovative ways to respond.

Seven major implications are identified with multiple thoughts listed for each. These all point back to one primary question: How will the church adapt to the changes coming as we live in a post-COVID19 world? The church has an opportunity to respond in a loving and Christ-like way through our present reality and beyond. How we do that will be based upon how aware and prepared we are.

Furthermore, we have to understand that the world will be different. We cannot go back to the way things were. First, many things were not working well for the majority of churches. Secondly, our world will look different. If the church does not respond to the new reality, it will become archaic and non-relevant - a poor reflection of Jesus Christ.

What this pandemic will allow is an opportunity for churches to strip away the “extras” it has been carrying. This may include the “sacred cows,” allowing changes that leaders and pastors have been afraid to make, moving our congregations from fans to followers of Jesus.

This is also an opportunity for church leaders to implement new strategies and become more intentional in areas of discipleship, worship gatherings, community presence, and so on. This pandemic will continue to impact different parts of the country in a variety of ways, and these thoughts and questions will need to be processed through each church's unique context.

Appendix A contains resources to help churches navigate these changing times. These resources are not quick fixes, but tools to help create strategies and lead change.

Appendix B contains articles and important quotes that are associated with each main thought. These articles have been used to develop the thoughts, implications, and questions for the church.

Appendix C contains a list of all the States as they announce guidelines for their stay-at-home orders, guidelines for work and religious gatherings, etc.

Implication #1: Public spaces will be adapted for distancing restrictions.

- Restaurants/bars/coffee shops may have to remove tables and chairs in order to seat less people and keep social distancing measures.
- Grocery stores could continue to limit the number of people allowed inside the store to shop.
- Transportation services (airplane, bus, metro, etc.) may be limited overall, both in availability of options and capacity. For example, fewer routes/times may be available with only 50% capacity to allow space/seats between each person.
- As transportation services reduce their routes, it will cause overcrowding and maintaining social distancing can be a challenge.
- Public places may require proof of vaccination or other health documents before allowing entrance.
- Other spaces impacted: movie theaters, malls, beaches, parks.
- Cities may create or re-design sidewalks, streets, and other paths in order to protect the public. Example: one-way sidewalks.
- Stores may create one-way aisles.
- Windows/sneeze guards may be installed to restrict germs from transferring across desks, counters, and other spaces.
- Our schools may accommodate social distancing guidelines with spacing of desks, lockers, and other spaces.

Questions for the Church:

- How are we thinking about our facilities for worship gatherings?
- What will be the public's comfort level as it relates to capacity and distancing?
- Will we need to remove seats where we meet? Mark off spaces?
- Will the capacity change in our spaces?
- Do we need to create smaller venues for worship?
- Will we need to offer more alternatives for gathering in the same places? Perhaps meeting more often in smaller venues?
- How will we re-work our gathering spaces and sanctuaries so that people feel safe, yet still able to gather?

Implication #2: Demand for online services will increase.

- People will become more comfortable talking, meeting, and shopping online.
- Online services for businesses and organizations are now a necessity. Businesses will need to go beyond simply having a website to survive.
- Businesses and organizations with an online presence before the pandemic have had a jumpstart but will now be experiencing new competition.
- Many businesses and organizations may have to close their doors due to lack of customers or the inability to make the technology leap.
- Those who are ahead of the technology curve will likely be the major voices and leaders in their industry, thus becoming the experts. It will be up to them to help others.
- Older generations and/or those who struggle with technology, may feel left behind, “out of the loop,” or kept in the dark.
- Restaurants/bars/coffeehouses may need to restructure their facilities and staffing to accommodate for more take-out and delivery orders.
- Lots of creativity and innovation will likely take place in all sectors. Those with the bandwidth, experience, and leverage will be able to survive the initial phase.
- More third-party apps and business will exist to fill in gaps between goods and services and the end-user.
- Every business and organization will likely initially operate as a startup due to these changes.

Questions for the Church:

- How prepared are you to engage with people online? Beyond your website?
- The same “next steps” you have prepared for people who show up on a Sunday morning to your building need to be planned for guests viewing your online services.
- How are you making new disciples online?
- How are you developing your ministry leaders online?
- How are you providing pastoral care online?
- How might your sermon delivery need to change to accommodate people watching online rather than in a room?
- How will you reach those who are shut in without internet capability?

Implication #3: Workplaces will be forced to decentralize at varying levels.

- There will be varying degrees of decentralization based upon context and circumstances.
- Working remotely from home may become more normal for businesses and organizations.
- New standards of conducting meetings, collaborating with co-workers, giving presentations, and other workplace norms will need to be developed.
- New technology will be created as more needs are identified in a decentralized reality.
- Information Technology (IT) departments will be even more valuable in assisting staff with home office set-ups and education on how to use various platforms and software.
- Leaders will need to adapt as they learn how to hire/fire, lead, develop, and manage their employees remotely.
- Those who can lead their businesses and organizations through this season will likely thrive on the other side.
- Mindfulness of how many meetings are being conducted online and the toll it takes on employees.

Questions for the Church:

- As you think through a decentralized structure, what does this mean for your:
 - Staffing
 - Ministry Leaders
 - Budget/Facilities
 - Worship Services
 - Outreach Ministries
 - Groups Ministries
- We may need to begin to think about the church as a scattered, rather than gathered, community.
- Staff may need to be able to lead volunteers remotely.
- Should Sunday continue to be prioritized over the other days of the week?
- How can we as the church, now scattered and in our homes, continue to build relationships with people?
- How will you and your staff re-prioritize the pastor's work-life balance if remote work becomes the norm?
- How will you recruit, train, and release leaders to do ministry?

Implication #4: Socializing will change as we greet, communicate & interact.

- Handshakes, fist bumps, and cheek to cheek greetings may be eliminated from cultures all around the world.
- There may be long-term implications if new generations grow up in a “non-contact” society.
- Social interaction with non-family members and holding conversations standing 6ft apart may become the norm, feeling awkward at first but becoming acceptable with time.
- People who are not close family members coming into close proximity may feel awkward and put people on guard.
- Social distancing may breed mistrust with our neighbors, especially when they are not adhering to the rules/laws.
- Those who were already on high alert for germs in their environment will likely become even more alert to this risk.

Questions for the Church:

- How will the church/Christians interact with their neighbors?
- Will there be laying on of hands or holding hands when we pray with people?
- Will we eliminate the “greeting time” from our services?
- How will the church, when gathering, accommodate for those who are germ-heightened vs those who are germ-relaxed?
- How will we show grace to those who don’t want to shake hands? Or to those who do?

Implication #5: There will be more interest in what is happening globally.

- The coronavirus, specifically COVID-19, has impacted every corner of the world. Most people know something about what is happening in another country.
- Travel restrictions may increase between countries as they prioritize the health and well-being of their citizens.
- The global economy and the implications for companies who work and operate in multiple countries may be greatly impacted.
- Business travel may be limited, at least initially.
- Continued waves of the virus will be monitored in places like Europe and China.

Questions for the Church:

- What does this mean for mission agencies?
- What does this mean for short-term mission trips?
- What does this mean for missionaries?
- What does mission-giving look like for your church?
- Will the church back away from global missions out of concern or fear?
- Will there be more focus on local needs at the expense of global needs?

Implication #6: Isolation will create or heighten some pre-existing issues.

- Issues such as addictions, mental health conditions, and unhealthy relationships now have the potential to be more hidden.
- “Shelter at Home” is not a positive experience for all families.
- The home may not be a safe place for those abused by family members or others in the household.
- Unstable marriages and other unhealthy relationships may reach a tipping point (on the flip side, these circumstances may help repair relationships).
- People dealing with addictions to alcohol, drugs, and pornography may lack the support they need to overcome and work through their addictions.
- People with mental health conditions may be at an increased risk when dealing with isolation and loss.
- Support groups and counseling will need to be accessed via video and phone calls. Will everyone have the necessary technology to do this?
- Food insecurities and other socioeconomic difficulties may be heightened during this season.
- The food supply chain may be jeopardized as it adjusts to supply and demand as schools and restaurants close and grocery stores determine public buying habits.

Questions for the Church:

- How are you providing care for those dealing with addictions?
- Can you offer online support groups, such as Celebrate Recovery?
- How will you offer support during a funeral if family and friends cannot be in attendance?
- How can you reach those dealing with issues behind closed doors?
- How are you helping to provide food and other basic needs to families?

Implication #7: Some restrictions and safeguards will be permanent.

- Some people will be allowed to re-enter the workforce sooner than others.
- Those who are high-risk or have pre-existing conditions may continue to stay in lockdown for an extended period of time.
- Those who are not in the above category may begin going back to work but will have restrictions.
- Those who have been tested and deemed “not-contagious” may have to carry some kind of identification with them.
- Technology and tracking of a person’s health status may be viewed as an invasion of privacy but may be deemed necessary for the public’s safety.
- Gatherings may be limited to a certain amount of people.
- People may be forced to wear face masks if sick or in a high-risk category.
- Some form of bio-medical security may be put into place that will restrict our travel, work, and leisure.
- Contact tracing may become the norm as people work, shop, eat-out, and attend events in larger gatherings.

Questions for the Church:

- How will your church re-open its worship services?
- How much are churches willing to utilize “big data” to get to know people?
- Do you have the ability to minister to those who are at-risk or with pre-existing conditions?
- How much is your church willing to abide by federal, state, and local guidelines vs ignoring them based upon being a religious organization?
- Will your church require people to carry/show proof of immunity in order to attend worship services?
- Will you be able to conduct contact tracing if the government deems it necessary?

Appendix A

Resources for the Church

[CDC Document Outlines Guidance for Reopening of Churches](#) by The Gospel Coalition

[CHOG Resources for Your Church](#) by Church of God Ministries

[Church in Your Street](#) by Dandelion

[Church Pulse Weekly Podcast](#) by Barna Group

[COVID-19 Neighboring Toolkit](#) by The Art of Neighboring

[COVID-19 Response Resources for Churches](#) by Indiana Ministries

[Coronavirus and The Church](#) by Ed Stetzer

[Coronavirus & Online Church Resources](#) by Stadia

[Create a 90-Day Coronavirus Church Plan](#) by Catapult

[Indiana's Revised Guidance for Places of Worship](#) by Governor's Office

[ReOpening Church: Leading After COVID-19](#) by Vanderbloemen

[Webinars on COVID-19 and the Church](#) by Exponential

[What Relaunching the Church Might Look Like Over the Next 3-12 Months](#) by Ed Stetzer and Josh Laxton

Appendix B

Article Links & Quotes

Implication #1: Public spaces will be adapted for distancing restrictions.

- [American Airlines Gives Up on Most Overseas Flying This Summer](#) by Mary Schlangenstein, April 2
 - Quote: *American Airlines Vice President: “It’s a very difficult time to forecast the future of the airline,” he said. “Everything is on the table.”*
- [Pandemic has set the number of air travelers back decades](#) by David Koenig, April 8th
 - Quote: *“The recovery in air travel — whenever it occurs — could depend on many factors including social-distancing rules and the state of the economy...”*
- [“Like Sheep for Slaughter”: American Airlines Flight Attendants Speak Out](#) by Abigail Weinberg, April 1
 - Quote: *“...It also said that 50 percent of standard middle seats and all seats bordering flight attendant jump seats would be left empty.”*
- [Pandemic, fear and ICU](#) by Brian Howey, April 4
 - Quote: *“Some 36% of us used to eat at a fast-food restaurant on any given day, and lockdown has created a run at our grocery stores, making them look like a Moscow market in 1999. Krogering (local grocery chain) is different during a pandemic surge.”*
- [Boston suburb sets up one-way sidewalks to allow residents to practice social distancing](#) by Andrew Court, April 10
 - Quote: *“Police in Beverly, in the north of the city, have mandated that locals who are walking in opposite directions along bustling Lothrop Street must now use separate sidewalks so that they are not brushing up against one another.”*
- [Sneeze Guards and Temperature Checks Are the New Normal for U.S. Retail](#) by Jeff Green and Donald Moore April 10
 - Quote: *“For retail locations, that includes wider or one-way aisles (or both) to keep shoppers farther apart, touchless payments and Plexiglas shields (and sometimes masks and gloves) for cashiers. Store hours are being reduced, and the number of customers allowed in at any one time is limited. All the while, store surfaces are cleaned, and cleaned, and cleaned again.”*
- [A conundrum for New Yorkers: Social distancing in the subway](#) by Tom Hays and Marshall Ritzel, April 10
- Quote: *““The framework for the safe return to school in Spain would be in September, with masks, phasing attendance, first in high school, combining face-to-face and virtual classes, and making the timetables in schools more flexible,” Repullo explains.”*

- [Government advisors support reopening Spanish schools in September](#) by Beatriz Lucas and Emilio De Benito, April 17

Implication #2: Demand for online services will increase.

- [Most Americans will stay home this month even if lockdown lifted: poll](#) by Paula Froelich, April 4
 - Quote: *“Even if restrictions were eased by mid-April, 61% of Americans would still stay at home when possible — while only 19% said they’d go back to their regular life.”*
- [Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup](#) by Andy Crouch, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard March 20
- [‘No longer a luxury’: As life moves online, the offline fall behind](#) by Eoin O’Carroll, April 7
 - Quote: *“Some 42 million Americans, and a quarter of all rural residents, lack access to broadband, according to a February 2020 [report](#) from BroadbandNow. Even among those who live in places where broadband is offered, for many, it remains out of reach: Just [41%](#) of households with incomes below \$20,000 have broadband at home.”*

Implication #3: Workplaces will be forced to decentralize at varying levels.

- [This Is Not The Crisis, But It Is Just A Few Weeks Away](#) by Ed Stetzer with Josh Laxton March 23
- [In Italy, Going Back to Work May Depend on Having the Right Antibodies](#) by Jason Horowitz, April 4
 - Quote: *“...while the lockdown remained in place, the government had begun working with scientists to determine how to send people who have recuperated back to work.”*
- [Why Video Chats Are Wearing Us Out](#) by Doreen Dodgen-Magee, Psy.D., April 17
 - Quote: *“While humans are neurodivergent in terms of sociability and interpersonal preferences, we are all sensual beings. When we encounter each other, we take in information from many senses. Certain people and their places have specific smells. Often, physical touch in one form or another is involved in an encounter. In essence, the mere physical presence of another has the power of stirring feelings and awakening all of our senses.”*

Implication #4: Socializing will change as we greet, communicate & interact.

- [Germans snitch on neighbors flouting virus rules, in echo of the Stasi past](#) by Madeline Chambers, April 2

- Quote: *“Munich police took up to 150 calls every day last week from citizens reporting alleged breaches of corona rules, Spiegel Online said.”*
- [The Coronavirus Could Cause a Social Recession](#) by Vivek Murthy and Alice Chen, March 22
 - Quote: *“Yet the pandemic could trigger something else: a social recession—a fraying of social bonds that further unravel the longer we go without human interaction. This can have harmful effects on people’s mood, health, ability to work and learn, and sense of community.”*
- [Social distancing threatens social norms, mental health: 'It's hard to go back'](#) by Alex Swoyer, April 2
 - Quote: *“The constant reminders that it’s not safe to shake hands or come too close to one another isn’t healthy, and mental health specialists warn that these social cues will linger in our minds after the COVID-19 pandemic ends.”*
- [Fauci on US after coronavirus: No shaking hands ‘ever again’](#) by Dom Calicchio April 9
 - Quote: *“Not only would [ending handshakes] be good to prevent coronavirus disease, it probably would decrease instances of influenza dramatically in this country,” Fauci said.”*
- [Basic human gestures have become no-nos](#) by Jura Koncius, April 10
 - Quote: *“: If someone approaches you and reaches out their hand, what do you say/do so that you don’t hurt their feelings?”*

Implication #5: There will be more interest in what is happening globally.

- [European leaders warn coronavirus could lead to the breakup of their union](#) by Loveday Morris, Michael Birnbaum, April 3
 - Quote: *“In the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, the response among European Union member states showed that national interests trump more-altruistic European ideals.”*
- [Spain will slowly return to “normal life” starting on April 26, says government](#) April 8
 - Quote: *“Spain would slowly return to “normal life” but in progressive stages, following the recommendations of health experts in order to avoid a second wave of coronavirus infection.”*
- [Most New York Coronavirus Cases Came From Europe, Genomes Show](#) by Carl Zimmer, April 8
 - Quote: *“Dr. Gonzalez-Reiche and her colleagues found that these viruses were practically identical to viruses found around Europe. They cannot say on what particular flight a particular virus arrived in New York. But they write that the viruses reveal “a period of untracked global transmission between late January to mid-February.”*

- [Europe thinks it is past the peak of the first wave of the coronavirus](#) by William Booth, Chico Harlan, James McAuley, Loveday Morris, and Michael Brinbaum, April 17
 - Quote: *“Europe held. But it’s not yet time to completely let up, officials caution. Hans Kluge, World Health Organization director for Europe, said “the storm cloud” of the pandemic “still hangs heavily over the European region.”*
- [A ‘U,’ a ‘V’ or maybe a Nike swoosh? Economists try to predict what a recovery will look like](#) by Jeff Cox, April 22
 - Quote: *“More easily observable gauges of how the U.S. might come back will come even sooner as some European countries start to resume normal activity.”*

Implication #6: Isolation will create or heighten some pre-existing issues.

- [How will humans, by nature social animals, fare when isolated?](#) April 4
 - Quote: *“It has been less than a month since the Italian government imposed a national quarantine, but the strain on people’s mental health is starting to show.”*
- [CORONAVIRUS: HOW TO MANAGE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING SELF-ISOLATION](#) by Sophie Gallagher April 17
 - Quote: *“So what should you do if your mental health is suffering during self-isolation; are there ways to ensure you safeguard your emotional and mental wellbeing during a potentially extended period of being alone?”*
- [Study shows Americans are lonelier than ever due to coronavirus lockdown](#) by Marie Haaland, April 14
 - Quote: *“With so much unpredictability, 68 percent said they feel like everything is out of their control — and 53 percent of respondents wish they had tips on how to better take care of their mental health during this time.”*
- [Are we coping with social distancing? Psychologists are watching warily](#) by Craig Welch, April 15
 - Quote: *“Social scientists are watching with alarm, worried about the harm this will inflict on some of us: depression, substance abuse, domestic violence. Forty-five percent of Americans say the coronavirus outbreak has taken a toll on their mental health, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll. Cigarette and alcohol purchases are up. So, too, are gun sales.”*
- [Five threats to US food supply chains](#) by Niv Elis, April 22
 - Quote: *“I think we have a strong food supply system, and it’s diversified enough to provide the products to consumers,” said Olga Isengildina Massa, an associate professor of agriculture and applied economics at Virginia Tech. “Obviously it has a lot of hiccups right now, but we’re working through the system,” she added.*

Implication #7: Some restrictions and safeguards will be permanent.

- [Israeli Security Officials Concerned About Using 'Terrorist-tracking' Methods on Coronavirus Patients](#) by Yossi Melman March 22
 - Quote: *“Senior Israeli security officials are divided over the controversial decision to task the Shin Bet security service and its digital surveillance measures to track people infected with the coronavirus and those who were in their proximity. Until now, the advanced technology was solely designed and used to combat terrorists and criminals.”*
- [Apple and Google partner on COVID-19 contact tracing technology](#)
 - Quote: *“Since COVID-19 can be transmitted through close proximity to affected individuals, public health officials have identified contact tracing as a valuable tool to help contain its spread. A number of leading public health authorities, universities, and NGOs around the world have been doing important work to develop opt-in contact tracing technology.”*
- [Congress Hears Options—And Concerns—for Using Smartphone Data to Fight COVID-19](#) by Aaron Boyd, April 10
 - Quote: *“for populations that can’t or won’t abide by social distancing protocols, government officials are considering using smartphone location data to track individuals and how they might be spreading the disease.”*
- [New Whitmer order bans 'travel between residences,' with a few exceptions](#) by Paul Egan and Kathleen Gray, April 11
 - Quote: *“Until now, travel between two Michigan residences has been permitted. Beginning Saturday morning, that will end, except for purposes such as caring for a relative, an elderly friend, or a pet, visiting a nursing home or similar facility, attending a funeral with no more than 10 people, or complying with a court order related to child custody.”*
- [Dr. Anthony Fauci: Americans could eventually carry certificates of immunity to coronavirus](#) by David Sherfinski April 10
 - Quote: *“Dr. Anthony Fauci on Friday said it’s possible that Americans could eventually carry around certificates of immunity to the coronavirus once proper testing is widespread enough.”*
- [Beverly Hills Crop: Officials Order People To Wear Face Masks Whenever They’re Outside In The City](#) by Erik Pedersen, April 10
 - Quote: *“It’s come to this: If you want to go for a walk in Beverly Hills, or do anything else outdoors in that city, you’re gonna have to cover your face. City officials have decreed that everyone must sport some type of face covering when they leave their homes — be it mask, scarf, bandanna or cloth.”*
- [Apple and Google’s Coronavirus Feature Might Be an Offer You Can’t Refuse](#) by Will Oremus, April 17

- Quote: *“Companies will require it before you’re allowed to go back to work,” predicts Ashkan Soltani, an independent security researcher and former chief technologist at the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, in a phone interview. “Your grocery store could require that you show it before you’re allowed to enter the store.”*
- [Gulf Widens Between States Over When to End Virus Lockdown](#) by David Baker and Keshia Clukey, April 23, 2020
 - Quote: *“The governor’s order includes health guidelines for businesses, such as screening workers for fever and respiratory sickness, separating work spaces by six feet, and requiring use of face masks and gloves where appropriate.”*
- [These are guidelines salons and spas should follow in order to reopen, Gov. Kemp says](#) by Donesha Aldridge, April 21
 - Quote: *“As we begin the process of safely reopening our economy, it is critical that business owners, operators, and contractors adhere strictly to increased safety and sanitation guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.”*

Appendix C
State Guidelines
As of May 4, 2020

Alabama

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 30**
- Reopened: Beaches, Retail Stores
 - Guidelines: 50% capacity, no more than 10 people, elective medical procedures, take-out, curbside, and delivery
- Remain Closed: Schools, gyms, night clubs, theaters, bowling alleys, barber shops, hair/nail salons, tattoo services
- **Churches:** [Must remain closed for social distancing.](#)

Alaska

- Stay-at-home expiration: **March 28**
- Restrictions: 25% capacity, gatherings restricted to 20 people, social distancing, reservations at restaurants and with personal care services.
- **Churches:** Organizers of indoor religious services should also “establish protocols for sacrament, communion, or collecting offering with minimal handling of the offering plate and money and proper sanitization of hands and disinfecting of surfaces.”

Arizona

- Stay-at-home expiration: [May 15](#)
- Businesses open with restrictions: [May 8](#)
- Churches: “It doesn't ban religious services outright, but it doesn't authorize packing places of worship, either. Ducey also has urged Arizonans to follow federal guidelines discouraging gatherings of 10 or more people.”

Arkansas

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 4**
- Gyms, fitness centers, indoor athletic facilities: [May 4](#)
- Restaurants opening with restrictions: [May 11](#)
- **Churches:** “Though there's ample precedent for it, Gov. Asa Hutchinson hasn't banned church gatherings during the pandemic, arguing that congregations will voluntarily abide by state restrictions.”

California

- Stay-at-home expiration: [May 3](#) (although it will be extended; Los Angeles is May 15)

- Businesses: “Weeks away” and will be based on cases in decline

Colorado

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 26**
- Curbside Retail: beginning April 27
- Retail and personal services: May 1
- [Denver](#) stay-at-home is May 8
- **Churches:** Colorado still has a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people.

Connecticut

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 20** ([probably longer](#))
- **Businesses:** In person functions are prohibited for nonessential businesses.
- **Churches:** “Religious, spiritual, and worship gatherings of more than 50 are prohibited. This remains in effect until May 20, unless otherwise modified.”

Delaware

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 15**
- **Non-essential Businesses:** closed until [May 15](#) or later
- **Churches:** No more than 10 people in gatherings.

District of Columbia

- Stay-at-home expiration: [May 15](#)
- **Non-essential Business:** closed through May 15
- Churches: No more than 10 people in gatherings.

Florida

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 4**
- Businesses: Retail stores and restaurants to open at 25% capacity.
- Schools, bars, gyms, hair salons, nursing homes and long-term facilities to remain closed.
- Churches: Exemption for religious services.

Georgia

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 30**
- Medically fragile and elderly: shelter in home through May 13
- Essential businesses: Grocery stores, health providers, hardware stores, banks, utility providers, suppliers of essential goods, legal firms, news outlets, and nonprofits
- Other businesses opened [April 24](#): Gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, body art studios, barbers, hair and nail salons, estheticians and massage therapists were able to

- Theaters and restaurants can reopen [April 27](#), with same restrictions.
- Bars, nightclubs, and music venues are closed.
- **Churches:** Georgians are allowed to attend church services with social distancing. Online services are recommended.

Hawaii

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 31**
- Mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers
- [Churches:](#) No gatherings of 10 or more.

Idaho

- Stay Healthy expiration: Effective **May 1**
 - [Stage 1](#) (May 1-15): Youth Activities, Daycare, Places of Worship
 - [Stage 2](#) (May 16-29): Restaurants, indoor gyms and recreation facilities, hair salons
 - Stage 3 (May 30-June 12)
 - Stage 4 (June 13-26): Bars and nightclubs, Large venues
- **Churches:** “Places of worship can open if they adhere to strict physical distancing, sanitation protocol, and any CDC guidance.”

Illinois

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 30**
- [Face masks required in public.](#)
- State parks are open.
- [Essential businesses include:](#) grocery stores, greenhouses, garden centers, nurseries, pet groomers, pharmacies, gas stations, laundromats, banks, marijuana dispensaries and gun shops
- [Churches:](#) The new extended order says leaving home is allowed “to engage in the free exercise of religion, provided that such exercise must comply with Social Distancing Requirements and the limit on gatherings of more than 10 people in keeping with CDC guidelines for the protection of public health.”

Indiana

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 4** (except for Marion, Lake and Cass counties)
- [Stage 2](#) beginning May 4 (gatherings of 25 people)
 - Manufacturers, industrial operations, and other infrastructure may now open
 - Public libraries
 - Retail/commercial businesses at 50% capacity
 - Shopping malls at 50% capacity (25% for indoor common areas)

- Personal services: May 11 by appointment only
- Restaurants: May 11 at 50% capacity
- [Stage 3](#) beginning May 24 (gatherings of 100)
 - Retail/Malls – 75% capacity (50% for indoor common areas and food courts)
 - Gyms/fitness centers may open with restrictions
 - Movie theaters – 50% capacity
- [Stage 4](#) beginning June 14 (gatherings up to 250)
 - Retail/malls – 100% capacity
 - Dining room service – 75% capacity
 - Bar seating in restaurants – 50% capacity
 - Bars/nightclubs – 50% capacity
 - Cultural, entertainment, and tourism at 50% capacity (museums, zoos, bowling alleys, aquariums, and like facilities)
 - Recreational sports leagues may resume
 - Amusement parks, water parks and like facilities – 50% capacity with reservations
- [Stage 5](#) beginning Jul 4 (gatherings over 250)
 - Everything at full capacity and operations
 - K-12 Schools TBD
- [Churches](#): Can begin meeting May 8
 - With social distancing restrictions
 - No gathering size limitation

[Iowa](#)

- State of Public Health Disaster Emergency expiration: **April 30**
- [Will lift restrictions](#) in 77 counties on May 1 with social distancing and other measures in place:
 - Restaurants, fitness centers, retail stores, and enclosed malls can open at 50% capacity
 - Lifting the ban on religious gatherings of more than 10 people
- Other counties restricted through May 15
- [Churches](#): “...so long as churches, synagogues, or other hosts of a spiritual or religious gathering take reasonable measures to ensure social distancing...”

[Kansas](#)

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 3**
 - Phase 1: May 4 (up to 10 people)
 - Phase 2: May 18 (up to 30 people)
 - Phase 3: June 1 (up to 90 people)

- Phase 4: June 15
- **Churches:** no restrictions on gatherings for churches, however they are encouraged to follow state guidelines.

Kentucky

- “Healthy at Home”
- [“Healthy at Work” Initiative](#)
- Phase 1
 - May 11 – Manufacturing, construction, vehicle and vessel dealerships, professional services (at 50% of pre-outbreak capacity), horse racing (without spectators), pet grooming and boarding
 - May 20 – Retail, houses of worship
 - May 25 – Social gatherings of no more than 10 people, barbers, salons, cosmetology businesses and similar services
- Phase 2 (June or July):
 - Movie theaters, campgrounds and youth sports
 - Bars and clubs won’t open until at least June
- **Churches:** May 20 - “...allowed in-person services at a reduced capacity and that everything is contingent on being able to do social distancing, cleaning, sanitation and other accommodations.”

Louisiana

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 15**
- As of [May 1](#):
 - [Essential Businesses](#) are open
 - Restaurants can offer takeout, delivery, and outdoor seating (with no wait staff)
 - Retail with curbside retail only
 - No more than 10 people gathered
 - All employees must wear masks
 - Closed: Bars, casino, or place of amusements, personal care services, gyms and fitness centers
- **Churches:** Effective May 1, can meet with [guidelines](#).

Maine

- Stay-safer-at-home expiration: [May 31](#)
- [Timeline](#):
 - Beginning May 1

- No more than 10 people
 - Personal services: barber shops, hair salons and pet grooming
 - Beginning June 1
 - Up to 50 people can gather
 - Restaurants
 - Fitness centers
 - Retail stores
 - Beginning July 1
 - Up to 50 people can gather
 - Hotels, campgrounds RV parks with reservations
 - Bars
 - Personal services: spas, tattoo and piercing parlors, massage facilities
- **Churches:** As of May 1, “Limited drive-in, stay-in-your-vehicle religious services”

Maryland

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 24**
- Developed a [Roadmap to Recovery](#)
- **Churches:** Allowed Drive-in Services as well as limited in-person service while meeting guidelines.

Massachusetts

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 18**
- **Churches:** Prohibits any gatherings of 10 or more people.

Michigan

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 15**
- Some [businesses](#) can reopen on May 7:
 - Public can participate in outdoor activities like golf and motorized boating
 - Landscape and lawn services, plant nurseries and bike repair shops can open with social distancing rules.
 - People can travel between their residencies
- **Churches:** A temporary prohibition on large assemblages and events is in effect, however churches are not subject to penalty.

Minnesota

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 18**
 - [Temporary closing](#) of bars, restaurants, and others.

- **Churches:** Christian workers are deemed essential; however, gatherings may not include more than 10 people.

Mississippi

- Safer-at-home expiration: **May 11**
- Only essential travel is permitted.
- April 17 some nonessential business are allowed to offer services such as drive-thru, curbside or delivery
- **Churches:** Encouraged to not meet but are not restricted. May hold worship services in the parking lot.

Missouri

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 3**
 - Kansas City's directives until May 15
 - St. Louis and county: indefinitely
- Businesses will be allowed to reopen as long as 6 ft of social distancing can be maintained.
- Indoor retail will be limited to 25% capacity
- **Churches:** Recommends following the CDC's guidelines.

Montana

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 26**
- Business must limit capacity and maintain strict physical distancing
- Some restaurants, bars, breweries and distilleries can begin providing some in-establishment services starting May 4
- Business who cannot adhere to social distancing cannot open... movie theaters, gyms, and other assemblies
- Out of state travelers and residents arriving home must quarantine for 14 days
- **Churches:** As of April 26, "Places of worship can become operational with reduced capacity and where strict physical distancing protocols can be maintained between non-household members. Places of worship should avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing."

Nebraska

- Coronavirus rules relaxed: May 4
- No stay-at-home order issued
- Restaurants must stay under 50% capacity

- Salons, massage businesses and tattoo parlors will be limited to 10 people and must wear face masks.
- **Churches:** Must maintain 6ft of separation. Items cannot be passed among worshippers.

Nevada

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 15**
- Businesses: Retail stores allowed under curbside commerce models similar to restaurants
- **Churches:** “Drive-in services are now permitted for places of worship, as long as congregants stay in a vehicle and maintain at least 6 feet of social distance from people not in their household.”

New Hampshire

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 31**
- Industries that can operate with guidance: campgrounds, state parks, manufacturing.
- Industries begin May 4: Certain Health Care Services
- Industries begin May 11: Retail, Drive-in theater, golf courses, personal services
- Industries begin May 18: Restaurants
- **Churches:** Should follow state guidelines for less than 10 people gathering and 6 ft of social distance.

New Jersey

- Stay-at-home expiration: **No date**
- Here is a list of essential and non-essential businesses.
- **Churches:** Currently no gatherings are allowed.

New Mexico

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 15**
- **Churches:** Groups of 5 or more are prohibited.

New York

- Nonessential businesses are closed until **May 15**
- Monitoring cases and looking for 14 days of decline before reopening in phases with 2 weeks in between phases:
 - Phase 1: Construction and manufacturing activities and must be low risk
 - Phase 2: Business-by-business analysis looking at overall importance and risk of reopening
- **Churches:** Non-essential gatherings of individuals are canceled or postponed.

North Carolina

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 8**
- [Opening in 3 phases](#) if cases decline:
 - Phase 1: stay-at-home orders will remain with some business allowed to open
 - Phase 2: stay-at-home orders will lift, but vulnerable population encouraged to stay home. Churches, bars, and restaurants could operate at reduced capacity.
 - Phase 3: ease restrictions on vulnerable populations and increase capacities in businesses and social gatherings.
- **Churches:** Are deemed essential, but the order bans gatherings of more than 10 people and must stay 6ft apart.

North Dakota

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 1**
- Businesses are starting under [ND Smart Restart](#):
- Bars and restaurants, recreational facilities, health clubs and athletic facilities, salons, and tattoo studios
- Must maintain social distancing of six feet, avoid entering if they have a cough or fever,
- Must provide contactless payment and hand sanitizer
- Face masks are encouraged.
- **Churches:** All industries should follow [protocols](#) for gatherings.

Ohio

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 29**
- General Office Environments: May 4 (with [guidelines](#))
- Manufacturing, Distribution, and Construction: May 4 (with [guidelines](#))
- Retail stores and consumer and service businesses: May 12 (with [guidelines](#))
- [Continued Closures](#):
 - Personal services to remain closed
 - Restaurants and bars to continue provide carry out only.
 - Entertainment, Recreation, and Gyms
- **Churches:** Gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited.

Oklahoma

- Restrictions expired: **April 24**
- Personal care business can reopen by appointment
- By May 1, restaurants, dining rooms, movie theaters, sporting venues and gyms will reopen. Bars to stay closed.

- **Churches:** “Starting on May 1, Places of worship can reopen for in-person meetings or worship, if they leave every other row or pew open and adhere to CDC-recommended social distancing and sanitation protocols, plus the recommended guidelines from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.”

Oregon

- Stay-at-home expiration: **No date**
- Allowed: Hospitals/health care, grocery stores, banks and credit unions, pharmacies, take-out/delivery from restaurants and bars, pet stores, gas stations, certain retail, outdoor activities, childcare facilities
- Not Allowed: Social gatherings (parties, celebrations) with people from outside of your household, Dine-in restaurants and bars, Nightclubs and concerts, Shopping at outdoor or indoor malls and retail complexes, Gyms, sports and fitness centers, health clubs, and exercise studios, dance and yoga studios, Hair salons, barbershops, nail salons, day spas and massage services, non-medical wellness spas, cosmetic stores, tattoo parlors, Theaters, amusement parks, arcades, bowling alleys, music concerts, sporting events, museums, skating rinks, State parks, playgrounds, campgrounds, pools, skate parks, festivals
- **Churches:** Gatherings of 25 or more are prohibited. Drive-in style services are permitted.

Pennsylvania

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 8**
- Golf courses, marinas, guided fishing trips and private campgrounds to open May 1
- **Churches:** “Religious institutions (are exempt,) however, religious leaders are encouraged to find alternatives to in-person gatherings and to avoid endangering their congregants. Individuals should not gather in religious buildings or homes for services or celebrations until the stay at home order is lifted.”

Rhode Island

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 8**
- Will move to next phase after 14 days of downward trend in number of cases or hospitalizations
- Phase 1: “Testing the Water”
 - Stay at home is lifted
 - Gatherings are limited to 10 people
 - Various retail and business can open with restrictions
- Phase 2: “Navigating Our Way”
 - More businesses opening

- Some restrictions lifted or relaxed.
- Phase 3: “Picking Up Speed”
 - Will “build on our learning from the first two phases.”
- **Churches:** Nothing specific found for churches.

South Carolina

- [“Work or home”](#) expiration: **May 4**
- State of Emergency order in effect through **May 12**
- Restaurants can reopen with outdoor seating only following guidelines.
- Some retail stores can reopen at 20% capacity per 1000 sq ft.:
 - Furniture, books, music, flowers, clothing and accessories, department stores, sporting goods stores and flea markets
- Beaches allowed to open at the discretion of local government
- **Churches:** No specific information found for churches post “Work or Home” orders lifted.

South Dakota

- [Executive Order](#) expiration: **May 31**
- Issued [“Back to Normal”](#) Plan
- Churches: “Churches were never required to close; as they resume services, they are encouraged to consider the guidelines for “public gatherings” and to consider steps to maintain reasonable physical distancing.”

Tennessee

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 30**
- The [“Tennessee Pledge”](#) gives guidelines to employers and employees as the state reopens.
- **Churches:** Governor is allowing churches to decide when and how to open.

Texas

- Stay-at-home expiration: **April 30**
- [Phase One:](#) May 1
 - Retail stores, restaurants, movie theaters, malls, museums, and libraries at 25% capacity.
- **Churches:** Has provided a checklist for minimum standard health protocols for churches.

Utah

- “Stay safe, Stay Home” expiration: **May 1**

- Using [color codes](#) as the state moves from High Risk to New Normal Risk
- Beginning May 1: [Moderate Risk protocols](#)
 - Groups of 20 or fewer
 - Social distancing and face masks
 - Limit out-of-state travel
 - Dine-in service allowed with extreme precaution
 - Personal services, fitness, and retail can open under strict protocols.
- **Churches:** Under “moderate risk,” churches holding services should use spacing between household groups, alternate schedules for smaller gatherings and stream services.

Vermont

- “Stay Home, Stay Safe” expiration: **May 15**
- [Businesses](#) to open in phases
 - April 20 – construction, home appraisers, property management and municipal clerks allowed to open with maximum of two workers and social distancing measures
 - May 1 – farmers markets allowed to open with social distancing guidelines in place
- **Churches:** “Unfortunately, the significant health risks posed by this highly contagious virus, particularly to elderly and at-risk Vermonters, requires religious organizations to suspend worship in a brick and mortar setting. When conducting alternative worship services such as online worship, organizations are directed to reduce in-person contact.”

Virginia

- [Stay-at-home](#) expiration: **June 10**
- [Essential businesses](#) are allowed to operate under normal hours.
- [Non-essential businesses](#) are to remain closed to May 8.
 - Recreation, entertainment, and personal care businesses; and limits restaurants to offering takeout and delivery services only.
- **Churches:** Services are permitted in parking lots. Participants to remain in vehicles at all times. No more than 10 people leading a worship service or ceremony.

Washington

- [“Stay Home, Stay Healthy”](#) expiration: May 4
- [Phased approach](#) for resuming recreational, social and business activities.
 - Phase 1: Begins May 5
 - [Essential business](#) only: All grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, food supply chains and other things necessary for continued operations will remain open.
 - State parks and recreational areas to reopen. Golf courses to open with maximum of 2 players at a time.

- [Low risk construction](#)
- **Churches:** Under phase one, “All gatherings of people for social, spiritual and recreational purposes are prohibited.”

West Virginia

- Stay-at-home expiration: **May 4**
- [“Safer at Home”](#) takes effect: May 4
 - Groups over 25 are prohibited
 - Essential businesses to remain open
 - Small business of 10 or less employees can operate
 - Restaurants can offer outdoor dining in addition to takeaway and delivery
 - Personal services can open by appointment only
- **Churches:** Under “Safer at Home,” remain essential and can remain open. Churches are encouraged to practice proper social distancing.

[Wisconsin](#)

- [Safer at Home](#) expiration: **May 26**
- [Extension](#) provides ramping up some service and operations to other sectors.
- **Churches:** Any gatherings must be fewer than 10 people and adhere to social distancing requirements.

[Wyoming](#)

- Governor’s office did not declare a stay-at-home order or the equivalent.
- A [Public Health Order](#) was created by the Wyoming Department of Health
- **Churches:** Nothing specific found for churches.

Sources:

[Coronavirus Restrictions In Each State](#) by NPR

[Reopening America: A state-by-state breakdown of the status of coronavirus restrictions](#) by CNBC

[See Which States Are Reopening and Which Are Still Shut Down](#) by New York Times

[This is where all 50 states stand on reopening](#) by CNN

(Nate Tatman currently serves as the Mission Advancement Pastor at County Line Church of God located in northeast Indiana. He and his family will be moving to Madrid, Spain in 2020 to serve as missionaries.)