



## Missouri Mid-South Conference United Church of Christ

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### **Suggested Guidelines for Holy Week and Easter Sunday Worship Services**

*Written by Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel on March 30, 2020*

The holiest days of the Christian year are upon us. Holy Week and Easter Sunday mark the essence of the Christian faith in the joys and sorrows of each worship service. The Churches of the Missouri Mid-South Conference have beautiful worship services that are a part of your heritage of what it means to be your local UCC church in your community. During the COVID pandemic, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has requested that no local gatherings of more than 10 people take place. In some of our counties and/or states, we also have a statewide stay-at-home order.

**Because of these public-gathering restrictions, I recommend that your Church not worship in person during Holy Week and Easter.** I am aware that as your Conference Minister, I do not have the authority to tell your Church what you can or cannot do regarding your Holy Week and Easter worship services. However, given the rapidly growing statistics of those who have contracted COVID-19, I strongly urge your Pastor and Church leaders to consider planning all of your worship services online.

I have been so impressed with your ability to worship on Facebook live, Youtube, and Zoom in such a quick time. Thank you! I am guessing most of us in our lifetime have never been forced to not worship in person for Easter Sunday. These are unique days that require all of us to sacrifice the comfort of our Easter traditions in order to love our neighbor and prevent further spread of the COVID pandemic. The following are my prayerful suggestions for Holy Week and Easter:

- **In-Person Easter Sunday Worship**
  - I suggest that your Church not meet in person and worship completely online.
- **Drive-Up Easter Sunday Worship**
  - If your Church wants to have Church members drive to the Church for Easter Sunday worship, I suggest that you clearly communicate beforehand that everyone must stay in their cars.
- **Communion for Easter Sunday Worship**
  - I suggest that you not provide communion. There is too much potential for the spread of COVID even if you are being very sanitary in the preparation and disbursement. Also, the Pastor might potentially be at risk for getting infected even with gloves and a mask.
  - Instead, I suggest that you practice a virtual communion where they take bread and juice/wine and you lead communion virtually. The Eastern Association practiced virtual communion at their spring meeting and it went well.

As Jesus showed us how to love unconditionally, let us follow his example by worshipping together online during this year's Holy Week and Easter worship services! And let us look forward to the Halleluias we will share in hugs, handshakes, and being together in person when this pandemic is over! May God's peace be with us. Blessings, Ginny