



Helping Churches Reopen Amid COVID-19

Basic checklist

This checklist is a basic guide to help prepare for the re-entry of clergy, staff and church members to your building. While this list addresses main areas for focus, it is not designed to be exhaustive, so please review more in-depth guidance across the rest of the resource [“Reset | Restart | Renew.”](#)

Prepare

- Meet virtually with church leadership and others (custodial staff, health advisor, etc.) to plan for re-entry.
- Ensure adequate supply and ongoing ability to obtain needed cleaning/disinfection items and other equipment (masks, hand sanitizer).
- Determine protocols for gatherings to maintain social distancing such as entry/exit strategies, seating arrangements in worship space, offering.
- Provide training to staff/volunteers on cleaning standards, safety protocols
- Consider having a “practice” service prior to restart to familiarize worship leaders on new practices and identify potential challenges (include all involved in service, including ushers, greeters, musicians, etc.)

Communicate

- Continue alternative worship avenues and communicate to church members that they are still available. Encourage all members to feel free to worship at home using alternative avenues, but specifically urge and support at-risk populations and those who have been recently exposed to COVID19 to remain at home.
- Prior to first in-person gathering, share plans with all members via appropriate communication avenues (email, social media, phone tree, newsletter, etc.). Make restart date, procedures regarding entry/exit, social distancing, wearing of masks and other changes known to all.
- Post signs around building to share new guidelines, encourage hand hygiene, and explain social distancing practices. Post signs directing people to new hand sanitizing stations.
- Notify your district superintendent ASAP about your plan to restart.

Clean & Disinfect

(Both before restart and moving forward)

- Thoroughly clean building using approved disinfecting chemicals. Pay extra attention to high-touch areas such as door handles, handrails, pews, restrooms, light switches and microphones. Consider deep-cleaning floors, carpets, pew cushions/seats, children's and nursery areas.
- Maintain ample hand-washing supplies in restrooms and provide hand-sanitizing stations throughout the worship space and the rest of the facility.
- Consider closing off non-essential areas of the building and limiting restroom usage to single occupancy (or close every other stall for social distancing).
- Remove items from pews and backs of chairs including hymnals, Bibles, attendance record pads, pens, children's worship bags, etc.
- Arrange for offering drop-off in stationary boxes or baskets, place bulletins (if necessary) in pews/chairs to indicate social distancing guidelines.

Protocols for Leaders & Volunteers

- Limit public gatherings in early weeks of restart to worship service only – postpone restart of Sunday school, choir rehearsal, children/youth/nursery programs and other activities.
- Minimize number of people assisting in worship to only those necessary (fewest needed at pulpit, greeting/ushering, handling offerings, etc.)
- Wear masks. Encourage members to bring their own, but have cloth/disposable masks available for church members who need them.
- Conduct temperature checks or screening for COVID symptoms for staff/clergy upon arrival. Send home anyone feeling unwell.
- Do not share or pass microphones, Bibles or other shareable items.
- Limit movement of people to what is necessary for entry/exit and seating.
- Review practices and adjust protocols as needed.

Clean & Disinfect (After each gathering)

- Thoroughly clean building after each public gathering, using approved disinfecting chemicals. Pay extra attention to high-touch areas such as door handles, handrails, pews, bathrooms, light switches and microphones.
- If multiple services take place, disinfect these areas between each service.
- Maintain ample hand-washing supplies in restrooms and refill sanitizing stations throughout the worship area and facility.
- Review practices and adjust protocols as needed.