



reset | restart



RENEW

Helping Churches Reopen Amid COVID-19

Worship & Gathering Considerations

- If your regular attendance is larger than capacity limits placed on gatherings by government officials – a certain number of people per square foot – how will you ensure that you are in compliance? Can you add additional services?
- What is the maximum number of participants you can safely host in your space? How can you best arrange seating for worship participants to ensure proper social distancing requirements? How do you communicate and enforce those limits to ensure you don't end up with more people than allowed in your space?
- What role will online worship and small groups play after restart? Live-streaming could result in fewer people attending in person, which would contribute to a safer environment.
- Plan how attendees will arrive and depart the worship space safely, while observing social distancing guidance. Can you set up one door as an entry and another as an exit? Consider propping open each entry/exit door or having a greeter to open and close doors to reduce the need for people to touch doorknobs and handles. Can you make hallways one-way?
- Consider removing Bibles, hymnals (see below), forms and writing utensils from pew racks – or create a plan to clean and disinfect all of those items between services. Encourage attendees to use Bible smartphone apps, or project scripture during your service. Consider recording attendance and visitors digitally. Remember, when counting online attendance, it is a separate line (Table 1, Line 7a) on the [GCFA Report of Membership & Participation](#).
- Is it time to eliminate physical contact during the passing of the peace? Be creative and consider engaging ways to connect during this time.
- Avoid passing an offering plate to guard against spreading germs. If online giving is not an option for some, consider placing an offering plate near entrances and exits where attendees can drop off their offering.
- Avoid communion until there is a safe way to administer the sacrament.

About choirs and singing

There seems to be ample evidence to suggest that singing creates a quantity of fine aerosols that can stay suspended in the air for long periods of time, move with air currents, and stay infectious for many hours, exposing virtually everyone in a building.

Medical, science and public health experts strongly recommend against singing indoors in public until a vaccine is widely available and widely used.

We recommend reading [this in-depth guidance about singing](#) prepared by the Wisconsin Council of Churches.