



Considerations & Safety Actions for Communities of Faith

Continue to take these steps to reduce your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19:

- Correctly and consistently wear a mask that completely covers your nose and mouth
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others who do not live with you
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Stay home when you are sick
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol)
- Get vaccinated when the vaccine is available to you
- Get tested if you have signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or if you think you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19

Even if you and others (including children) do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms, you can still spread COVID-19 to family, friends, and community.

Do NOT be around others if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, if you are sick, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19.



Promote healthy hygiene practices

- Encourage staff and congregants to maintain good hand hygiene, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Ensure you have accessible sinks and enough supplies for people to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes. Supplies include soap, water, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for those who can safely use hand sanitizer), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered).
- Encourage staff and congregants to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed.
- Whenever soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used. • Consider posting signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 and how to promote everyday protective measures, such as washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and properly wearing a mask.



Masks

- Encourage use of masks among staff and congregants. Masks are most essential when social distancing is difficult.
- Note: Masks should not be placed on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Masks offer some protection to the wearer and are also meant to protect those around the wearer, in case they are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects in between uses.
- Develop a schedule of increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected. . Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep them away from children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety risk to children using the facility.
- If your faith community offers multiple services, consider scheduling services far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces between services. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.



Promote social distancing

- Take steps to limit the size of gatherings in accordance with the guidance and directives of state and local authorities and subject to the protections of the First Amendment and any other applicable federal law
- Promote social distancing at services and other gatherings, ensuring that clergy, staff, choir, volunteers and attendees at the services follow social distancing, as circumstances and faith traditions allow, to lessen their risk.
- Consider holding services and gatherings in a large, well-ventilated area or outdoors, as circumstances and faith traditions allow.
- Consider appropriate mitigation measures, including taking steps to limit the size of gatherings maintaining social distancing, at other gatherings such as funerals, weddings, religious education classes, youth events, support groups and any other programming, where consistent with the faith tradition.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).

Take steps to minimize community sharing of worship materials and other items

- Consistent with the community’s faith tradition, consider temporarily limiting the sharing of frequently touched objects, such as worship aids, prayer rugs, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts and other bulletins, books, or other items passed or shared among congregants, and encouraging congregants to bring their own such items, if possible, or photocopying or projecting prayers, songs, and texts using electronic means.
- Modify the methods used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary collection box, the main, or electronic methods of collection regular financial contributions instead of shared collection trays or baskets.
- Consider whether physical contact (e.g., shaking hands, hugging, or kissing) can be limited among members of the faith community.
- If food is offered at any event, consider pre-packaged options, and avoid buffet or family-style meals if possible.