

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

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[CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

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- **Coordinator of the Turnout Sunday/Lawyers & Collars Voter Protection Campaign (AL, FL, GA, MI, NC, OH, PA) to equip pastors and church-connected lawyers with tools for stopping voter suppression in the 2020 election.**

www.turnoutsunday.com
skinnerleaders.org/census2020
skinnerleaders.org
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Church Worldwide is Called to Be...

“Salt of the earth”

Matthew 5:13

“Light of the world”

Matthew 5:14

“Wise As serpents and harmless as doves”

Matthew 5:13

Special Note to Leaders of Houses of Worship On Returning to Places of Worship

With Americans of color impacted disproportionately by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, leaders of houses of worship should **seek both the wisdom of God and guidelines of their state and local governments** in returning to their places of worship.

**“No two houses of worship are the same.
Visit the CDC website for details related to your
place of worship.”**

- Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner

Consider the Impact of COVID on Places of Worship



May 2020

- 1.6 Million Cases
- 100,000 + Deaths all races

African Americans

- 3 x Number of Infected
- 6 x Number of Deaths

Causes:

- Systemic health disparities
- Heavy burden of centuries of racial discrimination

Hispanics Also Hit Hard by COVID-19 pandemic

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

SCALING UP OPERATIONS

- Establish and maintain communication with **local** and **state** authorities to determine current guidelines
- Provide **protections for staff** and **congregants** at **higher risk for severe illness** from **COVID-19**.



SCALING UP OPERATIONS

- Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk.

Best Practice



SCALING UP TO RETURN

Create Church Privacy Policy

- Consistent with applicable federal and State laws and regulations, put in place policies that **protect the privacy and confidentiality** of people at [higher risk for severe illness](#) regarding underlying medical conditions.
- Encourage **any organizations that share or use the facilities** to also **follow these considerations** as applicable.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

SCALING UP OPERATIONS

- If your community provides social services in the facility as part of its mission, consult CDC's information for [schools](#) and [businesses and workplaces](#), as relevant, for helpful information.



The screenshot shows the CDC website page for 'Community and Faith-Based Organizations'. The page is titled 'Community and Faith-Based Organizations' and is part of the 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)' section. The page is organized into two columns. The left column contains a navigation menu with links to 'Symptoms', 'Testing', 'Prevent Getting Sick', 'If You Are Sick', 'Daily Life & Coping', 'People Who Need Extra Precautions', 'Pets & Other Animals', and 'Travel'. The right column contains the main content, which includes the heading 'Community and Faith-Based Organizations', the sub-heading 'Plan, Prepare, and Respond', and a large image of a building with the words 'COMMUNITY CENTRE' on the wall. Below the image, there are two main sections: 'Deciding to Open' and 'Ongoing Mitigation Guidance'. Under 'Deciding to Open', there is a link for 'Faith-based organizations'. Under 'Ongoing Mitigation Guidance', there is a link for 'Checklist for community and faith leaders'.

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Encourage staff and congregants to maintain good hand hygiene, **washing hands** with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds**.

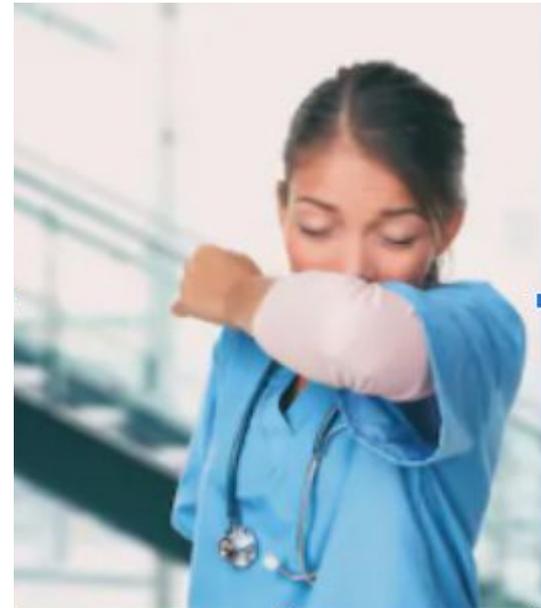


- **Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for those who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch trash cans.**

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- 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.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- 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 face covering.

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- **Cloth Face Coverings.** Encourage use of [cloth face coverings](#) among staff and congregants. Face coverings are most essential when [social distancing](#) is difficult.
- **NOTE:** [Cloth face coverings](#) 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 cloth face covering without assistance. [Cloth face coverings](#) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

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.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

INTENSIFY CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND VENTILATION

- 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.



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.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Consider holding services and gatherings in a **large, well-ventilated area or outdoors**, as circumstances and faith traditions allow.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PROMOTE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- 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.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

MINIMIZE COMMUNITY SHARING

- **Minimize community sharing of worship materials and other items.** 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.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

MINIMIZE COMMUNITY SHARING

- 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.



NURSERY AND CHILDCARE

- If a nursery or childcare will be provided during service and events, refer to CDC's information on preventing the spread of **COVID-19 in childcare settings** and adapt as needed for your setting.
- If holding **summer day camps**, refer to CDC's information on youth and summer camps and adapt as needed.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

STAFFING AND TRAINING

- **Train all clergy and staff** in the safety actions stated previously.
- Conduct the training virtually, or, if, in-person, ensure that social distancing is maintained.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

CHECK FOR SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Encourage staff or congregants who are sick or who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to **stay home**.
- Share CDC's criteria for staying home with staff and congregants so they know how to care for themselves and others. **Consider posting signs at entrances with this information.**



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PLAN FOR SICKNESS

- **Plan for when a staff member or congregant becomes sick.**
Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 during hours of operation and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who becomes sick at the facility to their home or a healthcare facility.



PLAN FOR SICKNESS

- **Notify local health officials if a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been at the facility** and communicate with staff and congregants about potential exposure **while maintaining confidentiality** as required by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) or other applicable laws and in accordance with religious practices.

PLAN FOR SICKNESS

- Advise those with exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
- **Close off areas used by the sick person** and do not use the area until after cleaning and disinfection. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.

COVID – 19

**QUARANTINE
AREA**

**DO NOT ENTER
WITHOUT
AUTHORIZATION**

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

PLAN FOR SICKNESS

- Advise staff and congregants with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 not to return to the facility until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

MAINTAIN HEALTHY OPERATIONS

- **Implement flexible sick leave and related flexible policies** and practices for staff (e.g. allow work from home, if feasible), and provide requested reasonable accommodation absent undue hardship to individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other applicable laws and in accordance with religious practices.



MAINTAIN HEALTHY OPERATIONS

- Monitor absenteeism and create a **roster of trained back-up staff**.
- **Designate a staff person** to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Staff, clergy, volunteers, and congregants should know who this person is and how to contact them if they become sick or are around others diagnosed with COVID-19. The designated person should also be aware of state or local regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

MAINTAIN HEALTHY OPERATIONS

- Consider similar monitoring, planning, and training for volunteers who often perform important duties, for example: greeters, ushers, childcare.
- Consider that volunteer and staff may need to increase to implement cleaning and safety protocols and to accommodate additional services with reduced attendance.
- **Communicate clearly with staff and congregants** about actions being taken to protect their health.



CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

SIGNS AND MESSAGES

- **Post signs in highly visible locations** (entrances, restrooms, gathering halls/community rooms/gyms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering).
- Include messages (for example, videos) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and congregants (such as in emails and on community websites and social media accounts).

CDC Guidelines for Returning to Places of Worship

SIGNS AND MESSAGES

- Find freely available CDC print and digital resources on [CDC's communications resources main page.](#)

The screenshot displays the CDC website's page for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The page features a teal header with the CDC logo and the text 'Centers for Disease Control and Prevention' and 'CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™'. A search bar is located in the top right corner, with 'Coronavirus' entered and a search icon. Below the search bar is a link for 'Advanced Search'. The main content area is titled 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)' and includes a navigation menu on the left with categories such as Symptoms, Testing, Prevent Getting Sick, If You Are Sick, Daily Life & Coping, People Who Need Extra Precautions, Pets & Other Animals, Travel, Frequently Asked Questions, Cases, Data & Surveillance, Communities, Schools & Workplaces, Healthcare Professionals, Health Departments, Laboratories, CDC's Response, and Global COVID-19. The 'Communication Resources' section is highlighted, showing a 'Print Page' button and a large image of a hand pointing at a document. Below the image is a 'Guidance Documents' section with a search bar and a 'Learn more' link. The 'Communication Tools' section is also visible, featuring three cards: 'Social Media Toolkit' (Toolkit to help localize efforts in...), 'COVID-19 Microsite' (Real-time COVID-19 information...), and 'Digital Press Kit' (A collection of media resources...).