

Recommended Guidance for Morgan County (Places of Worship)

These guidelines are recommendations for Places of Worship in our community to begin to meet again inside their buildings in a way that will help protect their parishioners' health.

Church leaders must understand that whenever they choose to open their facilities, they now have a greater social responsibility for keeping everyone safe. It is encouraged for churches to do a "soft opening" so they might have adequate time to prepare their facilities and educate their parishioners on their plans to open.

Social Distancing

- All parishioners shall adhere to social distancing requirements at all times and continue to practice proper hygiene.
- Families shall sit together as a family group but be seated at least 6 ft. from other families. Hugs and handshakes should be strongly discouraged for the next few weeks.
- Post Social Distancing reminders on doors, on video screens and make announcements. Signage might also include "If you are ill we invite you to join us for worship online until you are feeling better."
- Places of Worship should limit their attendance to 30% of their seating capacity to allow for proper distancing between families. Adding additional service times and opening up fellowship halls or balconies for seating with video screens are a possible solution. A special service time for the elderly and "at-risk" parishioners is also a good option.
- It is recommended that Places of Worship not hold any special dinners or events that would bring a crowd through May 31, 2020.
- It is recommended that churches not offer nursery or children's church ministries through May 31, 2020.

Cleanliness

- Offer plenty of hand sanitizer in various locations and encourage usage.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of the facility.
- It is suggested to not pass the offering plate from person to person. Some ideas are a "giving box" at the entrances, online giving or if possible, one person holding the plate at all times.
- If your Place of Worship offers communion during services, it is recommended to use individual communion packets.
- It is recommended not to use hymnals or hand out bulletins.
- Shorten service times to 45 minutes or less in order to cut down the exposure time and to decrease the number of people needing to use the rest room.