

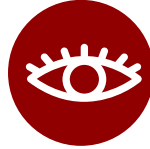
# CORONAVIRUS

## COVID-19 & RELIGIOUS SERVICES

### WHAT ARE THE BASIC PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE?



wash hands often,  
use soap and scrub  
for 20 seconds



avoid touching  
your face - eyes,  
nose and mouth



cover mouth with  
sleeve or tissue to  
sneeze or cough



contact health provider  
for fever, cough,  
difficulty breathing

### PROTECT THE MEMBERS OF YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP

Consider temporarily canceling or moving religious services to online formats whenever possible. The "Stay Home Missouri" order permits religious gatherings of up to ten people as long as they maintain social distancing guidelines of at least six feet between individuals.

Online options may include:

- Video-conferencing (such as Zoom or Google Hangouts). These are media with more interactive capability. They can be highly effective with smaller groups. Larger groups may sometimes be more difficult because of issues with bandwidth.
- Webcasting (such as Facebook Live) tends to be an effective broadcasting medium. It has much less interactive capacity than video-conferencing. May be preferable for a larger group.
- Audio only (such as telephone conference calls) can be more interactive than webcasting but does not provide visual participation.
- Taped Broadcasts (such as YouTube) provide access to pre-recorded services. There is no interaction but it can be accessible any time.

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHEN PLANNING SERVICES

According to the CDC, religious leaders should decide whether to modify specific religious rites, rituals, and services, consulting with local health officials as needed. For those small groups who do meet consider the following preventive actions:

- Nodding, bowing, or waving instead of shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.
- Avoiding holding hands during the service/prayers.

# COVID-19 & RELIGIOUS SERVICES

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHEN PLANNING SERVICES (CONT.)

- Modifying the method for collecting regular financial contributions – using a stationary collection box, the mail, or electronic methods – instead of passing a collection tray.
- Considering modification of practices that are specific to particular faith traditions. For example, congregations that practice Communion could consider modifying or suspending this practice. Modifications could include:
  - Ensuring that religious leaders always wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol prior to conducting the service and Communion.
  - Placing the Communion elements in the recipient's hand, not on their tongue, and avoiding use of a common cup.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Discourage the elderly, those with underlying health conditions and other high-risk populations from participating in face-to-face services. Consider other low-risk ways to incorporate them into your religious community such as small group or one-on-one fellowship through video-conferencing.
- Encourage the use of masks and gloves when meeting in small groups. Religious leaders may want to consider modeling this behavior.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that are frequently touched such as hymnals, prayer books, sinks, doorknobs, bathroom surfaces, tables and chairs, and phones. Disinfect the facility between services according to CDC guidelines.
- Ensure all social distancing guidelines are met.
- Suspend traditions that increase risk of spreading the virus such as touching or kissing sacred objects or scrolls, drinking out of the same cup or using communal water until the threat of the Coronavirus has passed.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON COVID-19 AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Center for Disease Control (CDC), [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Center for Disease Control (CDC), [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)

Center for Disease Control (CDC), [Resources for Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)

Center for Disease Control (CDC), [Interim Guidance for Community and Faith Leaders](#)

Missouri Governor, [Stay Home Missouri Order – Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, [COVID-19 Considerations for Churches and Places of Worship](#)