

RE-ENTERING WELL TIP SHEETS

A COMPANION TO THE BWC GUIDELINES FOR RE-ENTERING WELL



VISIT BWCUMC.ORG/RE-ENTRY FOR MORE GUIDANCE ON
DOING MINISTRY SAFELY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

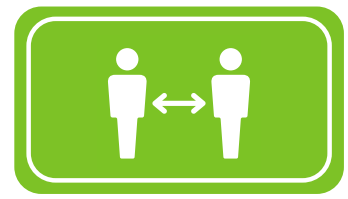
TABLE OF CONTENTS



Click the Tip Sheet titles below to navigate to that page.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AT CHURCH	3
ENFORCING NECESSARY HEALTH POLICIES	5
TRACKING ATTENDANCE	7
GREETERS, USHERS, AND COMMUNION STEWARDS	8
WORSHIPPING OUTDOORS	10
MUSICIANS	11
CELEBRATING COMMUNION	13
PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	14
OFFERING AND COLLECTIONS	16
COFFEE HOUR AND FELLOWSHIP TIME	18
NURSERY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL	19

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AT CHURCH TIP SHEET



People must maintain six feet of physical distance, not only once inside, but also from the time they leave their cars, enter the worship space, and exit the space to return to their vehicles.”

(BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well, p. 3)

Why?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stresses that the primary rule for interrupting the spread of the coronavirus is to consistently practice physical distancing of six feet or more between people at all times. This still remains true for unvaccinated persons. The Re-entering Well Task Force has likely already prepared the congregation for this significant change in behavior at church to ensure that measures are in place to monitor and reinforce the practice of physical distancing.

When?

Until CDC Guidelines are revised, physical distancing must be observed anytime people enter a church facility. This practice does not apply to fully vaccinated people.

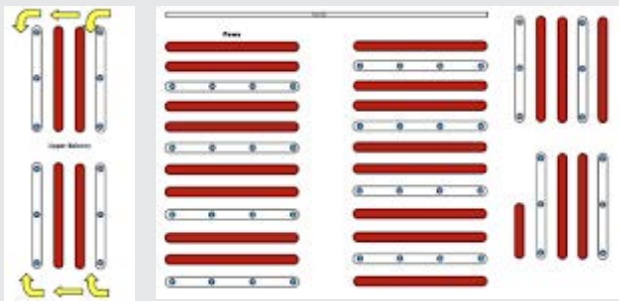
Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Church facilities should be set up to ensure people may easily maintain physical distancing from the time they enter church property until they leave.
- ☐ Parking lots should be modified so that only every other or every third parking space is available. This may be accomplished by strategically blocking the spaces with cones or by marking closed spaces with chalk or tape. If a significant portion of your membership is vaccinated, you may choose to designate only a portion of your parking lot for those who are not yet vaccinated.
- ☐ Post clearly visible signs outside your church doors asking people to continue practicing physical distancing both inside and outside the church.
- ☐ Consider using every other or every third pew for family seating.
 - ☐ Rope or tape off pews as necessary. See the model, to the right.
- ☐ At the completion of worship each Sunday, instruct congregants to exit by rows instead of all at once. Maintain six-feet of physical distancing and have ushers on-hand to ensure that there is no “bottle-necking” at any exit.
- ☐ Limit church bathroom use to the number of people who can simultaneously be in the space while maintaining physical distancing.
 - ☐ Make sure signs are clearly visible outside the bathrooms to encourage this practice.
 - ☐ Mark off six-foot distances on the floor outside the bathrooms where people may line up.
 - ☐ Larger bathrooms may accommodate more than one person.
 - ☐ Assess the number of urinals/stalls and sinks in each bathroom and calculate how many people can simultaneously use the bathroom while maintaining physical distancing. Post that information on the bathroom door.
 - ☐ Create bathroom spacing by “closing” every other urinal or stall and sink by taping stall doors and placing “closed” signs on sinks or urinals.

Here is a schematic Wesley UMC in Morgantown created to see how many could safely gather in their 350 seat sanctuary. They found that they can only seat 60 people at a time with 6 feet of social distancing requirements.

Pews are 19' long
Balcony Pews are 15' long
Can only sit in every 3rd pew to maintain 6 foot distancing
~36 people-main sanctuary
~12 people-upper and lower balconies
~60 individuals max
Families together reduce seating in pews from 4 to 3 and 3 to 2 groupings respectively

Ushers direct people to seating and direct people to leave.
One way in and out.



Additional Resources



- [Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

ENFORCING NECESSARY HEALTH POLICIES TIP SHEET



Leaders, identified and equipped by the Task Force, must take responsibility for enforcing guideline-informed policies to create a safe space for people who come into our church buildings to worship.”
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 3)

Why?

While it may sound dramatic, the cost of not observing physical distancing and other precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may literally be life or death. Churches that ignore mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and physical distancing are endangering the health and wellbeing of unvaccinated individuals and putting those with compromised immune systems in danger. Some countries have recorded a high percentage of COVID-19 cases that are traceable to faith community gatherings.

In this time of transition and vaccine availability, it is still essential to understand the importance of following health and safety protocols:

- Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has an elevated temperature (to prevent the spread of the virus);
- Maintain six feet distancing from people not in your immediate family (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom-free);
- Unvaccinated and vulnerable persons should wear facemasks at all times when away from home (to protect yourselves and other unvaccinated or vulnerable persons);
- Do not touch your face (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer to clean hands after using the restroom or after touching a surface (to kill the virus).

When?

Planning should be actively underway and may need to be modified for church preparedness.

Who?

Pastors and church leaders should model protocols at all times and speak often about the guidelines with intentions of positively influencing participant behaviors. They should also help the entire gathering understand that we are our sibling's keeper and demonstrate this by helping one another follow all health guidelines.

The Re-Entering Well Task Force should identify and train a team of “wellbeing guides,” who will ensure that physical distancing and other prevention measures are observed during gatherings. Please note that pastors will not be able to focus on this in addition to their other responsibilities on Sunday mornings and gatherings where they are responsible for teaching or leading.

Ushers and greeters should be trained and paired with wellbeing guides who are able to manage potential confrontations with people who do not adhere to the health safety guidelines.

Ushers and greeters will need to be trained and paired with wellbeing guides who are able to manage potential confrontations with people who do not adhere to the health safety guidelines.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Select the right people for these tasks. Wellbeing guides must be:
 - ☐ Willing to ensure adherence to policies inside and outside of the building;
 - ☐ Able to comport themselves as a non-anxious presence;
 - ☐ Calm and reassuring when interacting with participants, and aware that some people may have anxieties about being in public settings at this time. These anxieties may present themselves in unexpected ways; and
 - ☐ Reliable and willing to answer questions.

Implementation Checklist (Cont.)

- ☐ Develop a training session to:
 - ☐ Review this Tip Sheet
 - ☐ Create clear talking points that enforce the fact that we are in this work together as we seek to create safe spaces for all. Role-playing and scenario planning should be a significant part of the training. For example:
 - ☐ If someone is leaving their car or standing outside the church without a facemask say something like: *"May I get you a mask? One of the ways we show our love and care for one another is requiring everyone to wear one."*
 - ☐ If someone refuses to wear a mask one might say: *"If you are uncomfortable wearing a mask, please join us virtually. Thanks for understanding."*
 - ☐ If someone is getting closer than six feet: *"One of the most difficult things for me is to remember not to get too close to people. We put the tape on the ground and in the seats as a visual reminder. Thanks for helping us keep that protocol in place."*
 - ☐ Talk with your team about other scenarios and create scripts. Be sure to explore worst-case scenarios.
 - ☐ Schedule guides in pairs for mutual support, and communicate to the leadership team the strategic locations where wellbeing guides may be located during gatherings.
- ☐ Consider developing a mechanism whereby wellbeing guides can call for backup if participant resistance emerges or if the gathering is particularly large.

Wellbeing guides will play a key leadership role in helping a church do re-entry well. They will also provide leadership that ensures that blame and stigma related to the diagnosis of COVID-19 or decisions about vaccinations are avoided within the congregation. Knowing and sharing honest and factual information will enhance success in this role.

Additional Resources

- ["Standing Too Close. Not Covering Coughs. If Someone Is Violating Physical Distances. What Do You Do?"](#)



TRACKING ATTENDANCE TIP SHEET



Develop a method to document attendance at in-person worship and other gatherings. This is especially important in the event that someone develops COVID-19 and contact tracing is required.”
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 3)

Why?

Until further notice, church leaders must keep track of every person attending in-person worship or other meetings. This practice facilitates the process whereby individuals at a particular gathering may be notified of potential exposure if anyone present later tests positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. It is also a good practice for follow-up and staying in relationships with people you haven't seen in several consecutive weeks.

When?

Planning and recruitment for attendance tracking is an essential task for in-person gatherings. Additional volunteers to assist with this task may be recruited. *The church's task force will follow local and state directives to determine when the threat of the virus has sufficiently passed and attendance monitoring is no longer required.*

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Various methods are available for documenting attendance (pen/paper, tablets, an APP using cell phones). Regardless of approach, tailor the method to your context and uphold all protocols.
- ☐ It is essential that the selected tool (be it pen/paper, cell phone APP, or electronic tablets) be handled by only one person or be sanitized between uses by someone with gloves on.
- ☐ Research the best methods to record attendance and contact information. Here are some examples:
 - ☐ Prepare in advance an alphabetized list of all church members and their contact information to streamline the process. Make sure the date and time of the gathering is also captured.
 - ☐ Establish a welcome station for visitors with clear signage that enables up to two people to complete information cards while maintaining six feet of distance between them. The attendance monitor will guide the process. Completed information cards are placed in a designated container. After each guest leaves the station the greeter wipes down the tablet, table, pen, and any other touched surfaces.
 - ☐ If you incorporate an RSVP process for everyone planning to attend a gathering, those who RSVP will constitute the master list for recording actual attendance.
 - ☐ Train attendance monitors to capture the names, phone numbers, and/or email addresses of attendees
 - ☐ Attendance monitors will agree to be present before doors open for the gathering.
 - ☐ Attendance monitors will be stationed near the entrance(s). It is essential to maintain physical distancing if monitors are unvaccinated or vulnerable.
 - ☐ Monitors should be instructed in the “why” of attendance tracking and be able to assure people that the information is being gathered as a precaution to ensure the safety and well-being of all who are gathered. Information will not be used for any other purpose and will not be shared with anyone other than health officials as needed. Taskforce members need to ensure this understanding is maintained.
 - ☐ While the risk of spreading the virus is reduced in outdoor worship settings, attendance recording is still encouraged. Attendance information should be kept in the church office in a place known to the pastor and task force members.
 - ☐ Participants should be provided with hand sanitizer to use before and after handling pens, clipboards, tablets, etc. Pens, tablets, clipboards, and other items should be wiped down after every use.

GREETERS, USHERS, AND COMMUNION STEWARDS TIP SHEET



The risk for unvaccinated greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards is higher as most of their tasks do not allow for recommended physical distancing and include handling items that are touched by multiple people.”

(BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well, p. 3)

Why?

As churches continue to take steps to ensure people's safety and wellbeing, managing expectations is a vital part of reopening buildings and gathering well. Greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards play an essential role in setting expectations and providing warm hospitality in the midst of this anxious time.

When?

Developing plans to train greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards is an essential part of preparing to meet in-person and to create clarity as new guidelines are added and removed. This is also an opportunity to assess the building and create clear, informative signage to guide/remind people of established protocols.

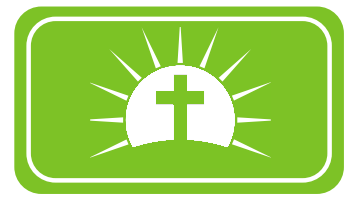
Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Establish set routes for entering and exiting the building and sanctuary. If possible, entrances and exits should be one-way only.
- ☐ Clearly mark or tape-off pews that are closed for physical distancing.
- ☐ Post clearly visible signs to inform parishioners of the new traffic flow. Orderly ways of entering and exiting the sanctuary and pews will increase safety and assist people in comfortably finding their place within the worship space.
- ☐ Recruit and train greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards who are fully vaccinated and less vulnerable to the virus. Training to include:
 - ☐ Clear information about COVID-19 transmission and why it is important for everyone to adopt the following wellbeing protocols:
 - ☐ Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has a temperature elevation (to prevent the spread of the virus);
 - ☐ Maintain six feet distance from others who are not in your immediate family (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom-free);
 - ☐ Wear a facemask at all times when away from home (to protect others);
 - ☐ Do not touch your face, mouth, or eyes (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
 - ☐ Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the toilet and use hand sanitizer to clean hands after exiting the restroom or after touching other common surfaces (to kill the virus).
 - ☐ Teach greeters, ushers, and Communion stewards how to wear masks properly: Cover both nose and mouth and secure a close fit around the face.
 - ☐ Cover both nose and mouth and secure a close fit around the face.
 - ☐ Put masks on before leaving vehicles if you are unvaccinated or vulnerable.
 - ☐ Once in the building, they should wash their hands, put on gloves, assemble needed supplies, remove gloves, and then sanitize or wash hands.

Implementation Checklist (Cont.)

- ☐ Learn about the wellbeing guides and how they will be partnering with greeters and ushers. (See “Enforcing Necessary Health Policies Tip Sheet” for details.)
- ☐ Review the purpose of their service: to make people feel welcomed, seen, supported, and safe. With purpose and the health guidelines in mind, walk through any replacement behaviors needed for your church. Here are some examples:
 - ☐ **Instead of** reaching out to offer a welcome in the form of a handshake, elbow bump, or hug, **we will** (wave, bow slightly, or _____) and say (“Welcome! It is great to see you!”)
 - ☐ **Instead of** handing out bulletins, **we will** (project on wall/screen; email content; safely place bulletins on pew seats using sanitized hands and masks); provide a recycling bin for use after worship while maintaining physical distancing.
 - ☐ **Instead of** escorting people to their seats, **we will** (take positions around the sanctuary to direct people from a safe distance).
 - ☐ **Instead of** distributing Communion elements in baskets or trays or having people come forward to the Communion rail, **we will** follow the Communion Tip Sheet.
 - ☐ **Instead of** passing an offering plate or directing people to process to an offering basket, **we will** follow the Offering Tip Sheet and **we will** (guide participants to designated, secure boxes around the sanctuary; continue to ask people to give electronically to reduce the amount of paper that others must touch and include online worshippers in the spiritual discipline of tithing.)
- ☐ Given the new traffic patterns, think about where you will need to be positioned in the space to allow for proper sightlines, flow, and distancing. For many, this will mean standing back from doorways unless fully vaccinated.
- ☐ Assist the congregation in making sure they have easy access to hand sanitizer, tissues, and, if someone has forgotten to bring one, a mask. The church’s Re-entry Task Force should set up and publicize a procedure to assist with the distribution and disposal of these items.
- ☐ While general health guideline signage will be provided, consider additional signage that will help participants feel comfortable and supported in new traffic patterns and behaviors. Keep the information brief and readable at a glance. If the church office does not have the equipment to make signs, investigate having them professionally printed.

WORSHIPPING OUTDOORS TIP SHEET



The church campus must be prepared to ensure that people may comply with physical distancing from the time they enter the property until they leave.”

(BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well, p. 3)

Why?

Some government leaders have “strongly encouraged” outdoor services for those congregations who choose to meet for in-person gatherings. Churches adopting this approach must be able to safeguard those who attend.

When?

Outdoor services may begin if area government directives allow for public worship. However, churches must be willing and able to follow all the safety and wellness protocols prescribed for indoor worship.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Review all of the physical distancing and other restrictions outlined in the BWC Re-entering Well Guidelines to assure that each of these guidelines will be followed outside.
- ☐ Check to see if your insurance policy has any guidelines or requirements.
- ☐ If churches choose to hold “drive-in worship,” do the following:
 - ☐ Coordinate with local law enforcement or emergency management agencies to ensure compliance with their rules and ordinances.
 - ☐ Organize and train volunteers to direct parking.
 - ☐ Utilize cones, signage, or volunteers to direct attendees to use every other parking spot.
 - ☐ All volunteers, staff, and clergy must follow physical distancing.
 - ☐ People should remain in their cars. Anyone outside of a vehicle must wear a mask and remain six feet away from any person not in their immediate family.
 - ☐ Utilize cones, signage, or volunteers to block access to playground facilities and other large fields where people may tend to congregate.
 - ☐ Nothing should be exchanged between participants and volunteers. Offerings should not be collected.
 - ☐ A good sound system is essential for outdoor worship. Consider an FM radio format that broadcasts from a stage to attendee’s car radios. Test the audio system thoroughly to ensure it will operate as expected.
- ☐ Outdoor worship during Phase 1 does not include the use of restrooms. In the event of a personal need that cannot be handled by departing the parking area and returning home, signal a volunteer for guidance. In the event of a medical emergency, please refer to the [Providing Medical Assistance Tip Sheet](#).
- ☐ If weather forces the termination of the outdoor service, it is not permissible to simply move the service inside.

Additional Resources

- [Safely Host a Drive-in Worship Service by Brotherhood Mutual](#)



MUSICIANS TIP SHEET



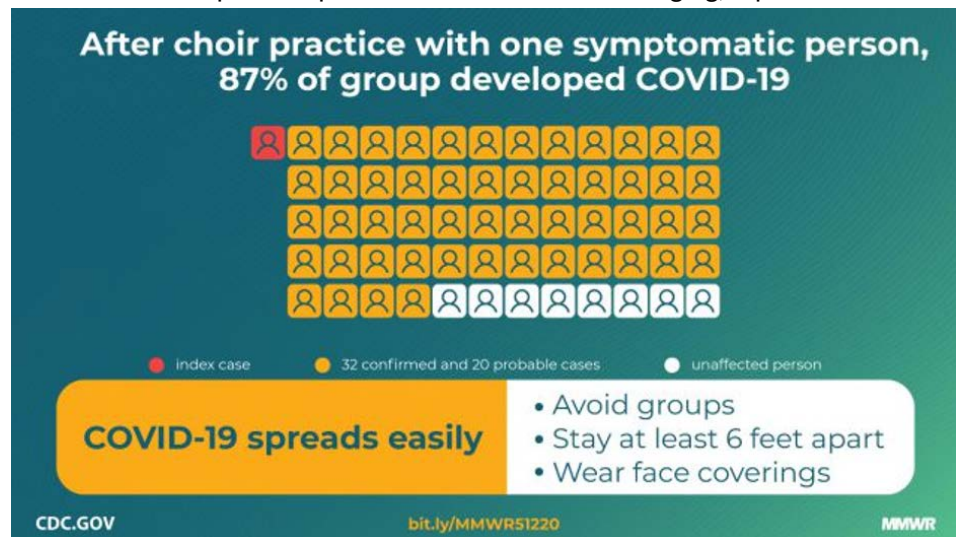
In the words of the Ecumenical Consultation of Protocols for Worship, Fellowship, and Sacrament (based at Emory University's UM affiliated Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, a consulting team to the CDC): "The latest CDC guidance for masks and (physical) distancing is for what individuals can do...not what Congregations, in which both vaccinated and unvaccinated people gather together, should do. We are one body in Christ, no more protected than the least protected among us. When we are among those who may be unvaccinated, we recommend being as the unvaccinated for the sake of the unvaccinated -- for their safety and to avoid stigmatizing them. In concrete terms, whenever we gather in groups that may include unvaccinated people, we continue to recommend that all wear masks, that households remain six feet apart, and that congregational and choral singing be avoided indoors." The Association of Teachers of Singing concurred with the Ecumenical Consultation that "congregational singing and congregational choral singing indoors is not recommended at this time, even with vaccination." Their options for worship INDOORS include "soloists or small ensembles of fewer than 7 people IF masked, physically distanced, and community conditions permit indoor gatherings."
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 3)

Why?

The risk for droplet transmission is high for unvaccinated choir members, soloists, and musicians playing brass and/or woodwind instruments. Given increased droplet and particle transmission when singing, reports of virus transmission during choir rehearsals/performances, and known difficulties and health risks of singing with a mask, all music production guidelines are still relevant for unvaccinated persons.

When?

While each local church will go through its own discernment and planning process to decide when to resume in-person worship, most churches have a plan for music while they are conducting worship virtually. We are still learning about the implications of singing in public. Fully vaccinated congregants may participate in music programs and congregational singing without masks. Unvaccinated participants must continue to follow established safety practices of masking, hand hygiene, physical distancing, and thus, no choral or congregational singing. Each church's discernment process will include discussion of the best way to care for the unvaccinated and most vulnerable members and visitors and may conclude that masks will be worn by all participants until a time when a high percentage of congregants and community members are fully vaccinated. That means the prohibition on congregational singing may extend longer than expected.





Virtual Music-Making Considerations

Some considerations for those who are assembling or are thinking of assembling to create music virtually:

- ☐ Guidelines for numbers of people in the sanctuary are determined by local and state governmental directives based on the status of COVID-19 cases in each jurisdiction. Within the BWC, this includes Maryland, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. If a group follows the guidelines to safely meet in-person to record music for virtual worship, then decisions will need to be made about whether vocal musicians can perform while wearing a mask.
- ☐ A webinar of major singing organizations in the United States met early on in the pandemic to discuss the future of singing while the coronavirus was still active. Here are some of the things that were mentioned about masks and singing: "No masks are currently safe for singing. N95 masks must be fit-tested first. They also decrease the singer's oxygen levels due to rebreathing expired carbon dioxide and increasing levels (in the body)." This is risky for people with asthma, COPD, and heart disease. Singers also mentioned that when opening their mouths wider to achieve some pitches and vowels during rehearsals that their masks were pulled down off their noses and over their mouths, requiring readjustment during the performance.
- ☐ Unless fully vaccinated, humming, even with a mask, is not a viable alternative to singing normally; aerosolized particles are still released through the nostrils and around the edges of the mask.

Cleaning Instruments Checklist

- ☐ Pianos and organs may be used in worship; however, the musicians must sanitize their hands before and after playing.
- ☐ When cleaning these instruments, please note:
 - ☐ Generally speaking, a soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts.
 - ☐ Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Cleaning pianos is a gentle process. Pressing hard or vigorously scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish.
 - ☐ If using an alcohol-based disinfectant (do not use products containing bleach or citrus) put the disinfectant on the towel, not directly on the piano.
 - ☐ Never leave any liquids on the keys.
 - ☐ Case parts finishes vary greatly and may easily be cleaned with disinfectant wipes and sprays. A soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts. Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels.



Additional Resources

- [Resources for Choral Professionals during a Pandemic](#)
- ["What Do Science and Data Say About the Near-Term Future of Singing."](#)
a webinar co-sponsored by experts in the field of choral singing
- [How to Create a Virtual Choir Video](#)
- [Droplets and Aerosols in the Transmission of SARS-CoV-2.](#)
an article from the New England Journal of Medicine
- [Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering.](#)
an article from the New England Journal of Medicine
- [Singing, the Church and the COVID-19: A Caution for Moving Forward in Our Current Pandemic](#)
- [High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020](#)



CELEBRATING COMMUNION

TIP SHEET



Why?

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is one of two sacraments in The United Methodist Church. (Baptism is the other sacrament.) Preserving the sanctity of this holy ritual while celebrating it safely may be a challenge, but it is one worthy of earnest consideration.

When?

Fully vaccinated people who are no longer required to wear masks may take communion safely. Individuals who are not vaccinated must continue to follow established practices of masking, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. A number of guidelines should be followed to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Purchase prepackaged Communion elements. A box of 250 is for sale at [Cokesbury](#). A reusable chalice is unacceptable when attempting to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. If your congregation is practicing environmental justice, an alternative to single-use kits is to invite parishioners to bring their own Communion elements from home. Have a small supply of pre-packaged elements on-hand for newcomers or those who forget to bring their own bread and juice.
- ☐ Place kits on seats or pews before people arrive.
- ☐ Those who place kits on the seats/pews must wear gloves and masks while distributing the elements.
- ☐ Provide extra prepackaged Communion elements on a separate table so people may take one without touching others' packages (e.g., kits placed 12 inches apart); position the table in such a way that physical distancing is maintained.
- ☐ Provide waste receptacles at the end of each occupied pew so that used Communion elements may be discarded immediately. No one other than the user should touch the used cups. Some participants may choose to take used packaging home for disposal.
- ☐ Facemasks must not be removed or adjusted in order to consume Communion elements unless one is fully vaccinated. Some people may feel vulnerable and choose not to receive Communion in the sanctuary. Invite them to take blessed Communion elements with them and partake in the safety of their homes.



Additional Resources

- BWC Resources on [Celebrating Love Feasts](#)
- To buy [prepackaged Communion elements](#), visit Cokesbury online
- Watch a video on [how to use prepackaged Communion elements](#)



PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TIP SHEET



“Though you will be communicating to people that they should stay home if they feel ill or if someone at home is sick, you must prepare for the possibility that someone may become ill during a church gathering. Identify a space in the building where an ill individual may be taken until they can safely depart and return home. In the event of any medical emergency, call 911 and administer first aid following updated guidelines.”
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 4)

Why?

We must be prepared to respond faithfully and safely to emergency medical situations that may arise during in-person gatherings. Bear in mind that all responses to illness, injury, and/or medical emergencies must be done using masks and gloves and adhering to all guidelines and directives designed to reduce the transmission of this coronavirus.

When?

Plans should be completed before in-person gatherings begin so that your church is prepared to respond appropriately to any medical illness or emergency during a gathering.

Implementation Checklist

Congregations should think through emergency scenarios ahead of time to be prepared to respond quickly and safely. Among the preparations:

- ☐ Maintain an updated list of congregants who are CPR and First Aid certified;
- ☐ Confirm that there are fully-supplied First Aid Kits in strategic locations around the church;
- ☐ If there are too few CPR and First Aid certified congregants to reasonably expect that at least two certified people may be present at each in-person gathering until all restrictions are lifted, identify a group of adults who are willing to become certified. Consider contacting the Red Cross or American Heart Association to set up virtual training sessions through the church;
- ☐ Share this document with those who are CPR and First Aid certified;
- ☐ Provide greeters and ushers with an updated list of congregants who are CPR and First Aid certified as they will often be the ones who communicate an emergency;
- ☐ Talk through what to do if someone has a medical emergency during an in-person gathering; acknowledge the compassionate impulse to “run and help” and identify the health-preserving safety reasons for limiting the number of people who respond to an acute illness or health emergency;
- ☐ Establish a space near the sanctuary where someone who becomes ill may be taken during in-person worship. Focus on a space that accommodates the person and those offering First Aid and support; consider the nearest restroom, a classroom, a parlor, etc.;
- ☐ Consider having a wheelchair in the building to assist safe transport to the designated space;
- ☐ Discuss that a non-life-threatening event such as a bad fall with possibly broken bones or a head injury will preclude moving the individual to the designated space. In such cases, First Aid and assistance will be administered in the sanctuary until an emergency response team responds to the 911 call.
- ☐ Think about people who may be called upon to safely help the person experiencing a medical emergency get to the ground or a place where they might receive care;
- ☐ Identify who will phone 911 and open entrances to facilitate EMT/ambulance team entry;

Implementation Checklist (Cont.)

- ☐ Designate the people who will perform CPR as needed.
- ☐ If an adult's heart stops, you can still help by performing Hands-Only CPR. (The American Heart Association created guidelines for administering pandemic-specific CPR in April 2020).
 - ☐ Phone 911 and get the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) if one is available.
 - ☐ Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask or scarf, cloth, etc.
 - ☐ Cover the person's mouth and nose with a face mask or cloth.
 - ☐ Perform hands-only CPR: Push hard and fast on the center of the chest at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. (Hint: think of the tune Row, Row, Row Your Boat at a fast pace with compressions on each beat.) Note: More than one person will be needed to administer compressions at this rate; rescuers should switch out as needed without major interruption to compressions.
 - ☐ Continue until an AED is made available and/or emergency medical personnel arrive on site.
- ☐ Establish who will direct and assist surrounding congregants to step back and allow plenty of room to care for the person who is ill or injured.



Additional Resources

- American Red Cross: [Staying Safe and Helping Others During COVID-19](#)
- American Red Cross: [Steps for CPR](#)



OFFERING AND COLLECTIONS TIP SHEET



Offerings should be collected in secure receptacles near entrances and exits. We advise continued encouragement of electronic offering. A safe method for counting the offering must be implemented, including the use of disposable gloves.”

(BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well, p. 4)

Why?

As churches take steps to ensure people's safety and wellbeing, managing expectations will be a vital part of reopening buildings and gathering well. The giving of tithes and offerings is an important spiritual discipline. Even when people are not physically together, or when physical distancing adds complexity to togetherness, the act of giving nurtures disciples and enables generosity.

When?

Church leaders should encourage the practice of online giving. Tithing from a distance is a practice that may continue even after the pandemic. In order to care for the most vulnerable, the pastor and church finance leaders should create flexible procedures for collecting tithes and offerings when in-person worship resumes.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Until passing the offering plate is safe for all participants, the Re-entering Well Task Force and church financial leaders should select a location or two in the sanctuary where financial gifts may be deposited. The location and the receptacle should be secure.
- ☐ Recruit and train trusted volunteers to ensure that offering receptacles are not moved and that money is removed only by authorized personnel.
- ☐ Training of these volunteers should include:
 - ☐ Clear information about how the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted and why it is important for everyone to adopt the following wellbeing protocols:
 - ☐ Stay home if you or someone you are in contact with feels sick or has a temperature (to prevent the spread of the virus);
 - ☐ If you are unvaccinated, maintain six feet distancing from others not in your immediate family (to prevent the airborne spread of the virus among those who are symptom-free);
 - ☐ If you are unvaccinated, wear a facemask at all times when away from home;
 - ☐ Do not touch your face, mouth, or eyes (to prevent the virus from entering your body); and
 - ☐ Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the toilet and use hand sanitizer to clean hands after exiting the restroom or after touching other common surfaces (to kill the virus).
 - ☐ Teach offering/collection stewards how to wear masks properly: cover both nose and mouth and secure a close fit around the face.
 - ☐ If unvaccinated, put masks on before leaving vehicles.
 - ☐ Once inside the building: wash hands, put on gloves, assemble needed supplies, wipe down surfaces they have touched, remove gloves and then sanitize or wash hands.
 - ☐ Learn the Wellbeing Guides and how they will be partnering with volunteers. (See [“Enforcing Necessary Health Policies Tip Sheet”](#) for details.)
- ☐ Time during worship may be set apart to announce the location of offering receptacles, to encourage people to give, and to thank God for the many blessings we have received. If your church is able to receive offerings or second-mile giving via text or mobile device, create a script with that information and share it as well.
- ☐ Select a room for counting the offering that is large enough for counters to spread out and allow more than six feet between each unvaccinated person present.
- ☐ Select and train counters; see training instructions above. In addition, counters should adhere to the following:

Implementation Checklist (Cont.)

- ☐ At least two counters should collect the money immediately following the service.
- ☐ All counters, and anyone else who comes in contact with the money, should wear disposable gloves before touching the money.
- ☐ Masks wearing and physical distancing must be maintained for unvaccinated counters.
- ☐ Counters should practice safe glove removal and avoid touching anything with the gloves after counting the money. Sanitize hands after glove removal.
- ☐ Counters should wipe down door handles as they leave the counting room and then wash their hands.
- ☐ The person opening any mailed-in checks to the church should follow the same procedures as the counters.



Additional Resources

- [Collecting Tithes from a Distance](#), a BWC collection of resources



COFFEE HOUR AND FELLOWSHIP TIME TIP SHEET



Social/coffee hours may be resumed as restaurants return to full capacity. Food should be served wearing gloves and using utensils rather than offering open table buffets.”
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 4)

Why?

It is in relationship with others and time spent together that Christians grow in love for one another and for God. A time of fellowship before or after worship encourages these relationships. However, if being physically close poses a threat of serious illness, we must love and respect people enough to find other ways of engaging with one another.

When?

One truth has become abundantly clear during the pandemic: the church is not a building. During this time of online congregational gathering, people have discovered the importance of engaging. Coffee hours may resume if your meeting space allows for a safe flow of people in compliance with all local and state guidelines, remembering that unvaccinated people must continue to wear masks and physically distance themselves from others.

Implementation for In-person Coffee/Social Hour Checklist

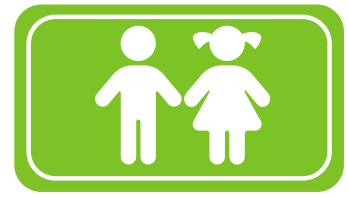
- ☐ When your gatherings include people who are unvaccinated, you may need to remind participants about adherence to the six-foot rule for distancing. One approach is to tape six-foot lengths on the floors as a visual reminder of the required distance between people. As weather permits, you may consider encouraging people to fellowship outside of the building.
- ☐ The Re-Entering Well Task Force should evaluate the layout of the space where coffee hour will be held.
- ☐ Create a space in which it is easy for people to sit or stand at least six feet from one another. Note how many people may fit in this configuration of the room. If it is not possible to provide a safe space for all participants, consider alternative plans for fellowship such as creatively inviting smaller groups to participate in different areas.
- ☐ Design the gathering space by placing furniture and other objects in locations that visually assist people's understanding of how they should move through the space. Consider having one path into the room and another out of the room.
- ☐ Post clearly visible signs both outside and inside the designated room reminding people to continue practicing physical distancing.
- ☐ Food should be served wearing gloves and using utensils rather than offering open table buffets.
- ☐ Order ample supplies of hand sanitizer, paper towels, napkins, etc., and have them readily available.
- ☐ Thoroughly clean the entire space after every event. That includes all items and surfaces such as tables, chairs, serving trays, bowls, and utensils.

Additional Resources

- [“How to gather with friends while physical distancing.”](#) according to meeting expert Priya Parker, author of *The Art of Gathering*
- [“How to Be Together Apart in the Time of Coronavirus.”](#) New York Times
- [“Ways to help older neighbors and relatives in isolation \(and how they can help you\).”](#) Washington Post



NURSERY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL TIP SHEET



The risk for transmitting the virus is high in church nurseries and Sunday School because children under the age of 12 are still ineligible for vaccine protection. If you are planning on providing these ministries, please carefully read the [CDC Guidelines for Childcare](#).”
([BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well](#), p. 3)

Why?

The safety and wellbeing of young people is paramount. While the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally shown milder symptoms such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Due to the need for physical closeness and touch in the care of young children, every measure should be taken to prevent them from being in danger of exposure to COVID-19 or exposing others such as Sunday School and nursery staff, and volunteers.

When?

When your Re-Entry Well Task Force is certain that CDC, state, county, and health department guidelines for children's safety can be followed.

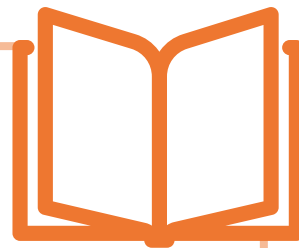
Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Inform parents that they are responsible to ensure their unvaccinated children above the age of 2 are wearing masks and washing their hands as per guidelines. The CDC recommends that children under age 2 wear no masks because of suffocation risk.
- ☐ Children's sermons may still be delivered; however, children should not be invited to gather unless physical distancing can be maintained between non-family pods.

Checklist for Re-Opening Sunday Schools and Nurseries

One session of the Re-Entering Well Task Force should engage key Christian educators, volunteers, and some older children to make informed decisions and plans for re-opening Sunday School and other children's programming according to CDC, state, county, and public health guidelines. School-age children and youth who have attended in-person school sessions will be familiar with mask-wearing, distancing, and hand-washing. Actively engage their experiences and ideas about measures that have helped them observe safe practices at school. Older children will model safe behaviors for younger ones.

- ☐ Plan training sessions for teachers and nursery workers to equip them for safely reopening the nursery and Sunday School. Cover the following topics/questions:
- ☐ How will physical distancing be observed, allowing at least six feet between each student? Visual cues are helpful to children, including tape on floors and chalk marks on sidewalks and driveways for distance-keeping, along with tables and chairs with ribbon, tape, or string to create aisles for lining up. Incorporate special reminders about masks, handwashing, and distance-keeping into lessons and games.
- ☐ How will physical distancing guidelines be enforced? Do more adults need to be added in each classroom?
- ☐ How may materials be used and shared in ways that do not risk transmission of the virus?
- ☐ Ensure that a significant supply of hand sanitizer is on-hand and remind or help students to wash their hands regularly.
- ☐ Develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting.
- ☐ Most importantly, repeat daily to children and their caregivers: if you feel sick, or not quite right, we'll miss you but please stay home!



Additional Resources

- BWC List of [Resources for Parents During COVID-19](#)
- BWC List of Resources for [Family and Children's Ministry During COVID-19](#)
- Example of [a Routine for Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting](#)
- Listing of [EPA-approved cleaning products](#)
- [Schools and Child Care Programs](#), from the Centers for Disease Control
- [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#), from the Centers for Disease Control