



Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
in Nebraska

CARONAVIRUS/COVID-19

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERING WHEN AND HOW TO GATHER IN-PERSON

(Adapted from Variety of Sources)

Planning Before Inviting Members to Gather:

1. Who from the healthcare community can help you develop best practices for your members and friends (e.g., chaplains, doctors, nurses, physician assistants)?
2. What areas of the church need to be deep-cleaned before anyone returns to the church property/building (to reduce the spread of the Virus)?
 - A. Who is willing to voluntarily do this?
 - B. What resources are needed to do the deep cleaning?
 - C. What protocols are needed to be developed and implemented to maintain the clean environment on an on-going basis (daily, weekly, monthly)?
3. What do you need to purchase and have stationed throughout the church building/property (e.g., sanitizer, disinfectant spray/wipes) and how will you gather them if they are in short supply?
4. What practices will you put in place to avoid/mitigate spreading germs (greeters wipe down all door handles/knobs, bathrooms cleaned each morning, sanitizing after services)?
5. Are there parts of the church property/building that need to be “touched-up” to convey to people that you are caring for the property, and keeping things clean?
 - A. What would the cost of such projects be?
 - B. Are volunteers available to do the work?
 - C. What resources would they need (e.g., paint, cement for sidewalks)?
 - D. What is a priority?

Inviting Members to Gather:

6. How and what will you communicate to members about decisions and protocols being put into place --- to provide assurance that you are maintaining a safe environment for people to come to?
 - A. How will you invite them to gather again in-person?
 - B. Will you remind people to “Stay Home and Stay Healthy” and maintain social distancing?
 - C. Will you ask each member if they have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19? And, if they have, tell them to stay home?
 - D. Will members/guests be told to take their temperature the morning of a worship service, and stay home if they have a temperature?

- E. Will you advise people who are high risk (e.g., Seniors, immune compromised, health conditions) to remain home?
- F. Will you advise members/guests to bring their own personal protective equipment (PPEs) like face masks and gloves?
 - i. Will the church have additional face masks for people to use and take with them (not return to them to the church)?
- G. Will you let members/guests know ahead of time that they will not be allowed to make personal/physical contact (e.g., shaking hands)?
- H. Will you advise members/guests to wash their clothes following each service?

Managing Members Gathering:

- 7. Will the church provide a single point of entry, and a single point of exit so that there is a flow people's traffic patterns in the church building/property?
- 8. Can church greeters be stationed at doors that are propped open so that people reduce the touch of surfaces?
- 9. Can church greeters help people to know where there are hand sanitizers, and explain that there are no printed materials to reduce contact with surfaces that might spread the Virus?
- 10. What will you do (temporarily) about seating in the place of worship that will create or foster the needed distancing (e.g., adding a service, bringing in chairs, moving worship to fellowship hall, asking X# of people to sign-up for service)?
- 11. How will you reduce contact:
 - A. Communion - have bread already cut and cups that are separated enough to not allow others to touch them when taking their cup (do not do intinction, as often fingers slip into the juice by mistake) - people can come up to take a piece of bread and a cup of juice right after they drop their offering in the plate
 - B. Offering - provide a plate/basket where people can place their offering on their way to, or from partaking Communion
 - C. Passing of the Peace - offering ways for people to connect without coming in contact, or even inside of 6 feet of one another
 - D. Worship Bulletins - Email the bulletin as a Word document, or as a pdf so that people can open it on their phones, and/or put the full bulleting with words to songs on a screen (now might be a time to purchase and install a large screen in the sanctuary)
 - E. Hymnals - remove them from the pews to reduce the things that people might touch, and volunteers will need to clean after worship
- 12. Will the church provide child care and, if so, what additional precautions will you put in place (e.g., checking temperature of each child before they enter, what snacks will you provide and how will they be distributed, how will you handle potty breaks/time)?

13. Is church leadership prepared to stop worship should protocols be broken?

The Future of The Church Gathering:

14. What are some new practices that the church will continue (e.g., streaming worship services, small groups/studies by videoconferencing, digital communication)?

15. What are some things that you will stop doing that you have adopted?

16. What are some practices from before March 15th that you will let go of, or allow to be adapted for the future church?

17. From this experience, can the church create a hybrid worship service that is both in-person and on-line platforms, allowing some to gather and others who are more hesitant to gather in-person to still join you?

18. From this experience, are you reaching people in the community who feel safer worshipping via technology, and can you find ways to connect with them more personally without their having to worship in-person?

A. Are there small groups that they can be invited to participate in virtually?

B. Are there Bible studies that they can be invited to participate in virtually?

C. Are there times of prayer that they can be invited to participate in virtually?

D. Are there committees or task groups that they could be invited to join virtually?

19. Does this all suggest any changes in church staffing? And/Or leadership roles?

Special Church Gatherings:

20. How does the church want to consider special celebrations:

A. Baptisms – Easter and/or Pentecost is often a time for Disciple churches to offer baptism, so how will the church navigate such celebrations? Will you wait until it is safe to touch people? Is there a baptismal service that you can conduct now to recognize someone who is ready to make a confession of faith and become a part of the Christian community, and then provide a full baptism at a later date?

B. Weddings – as we enter Spring and Summer and Fall, significant times for such celebrations of life as weddings, can the church provide a space and time to celebrate the vows that two people are making to one another, and then consecrate those vows at a more full wedding service later?

C. Funerals – people whose loved one has died deserve a chance to say their formal goodbyes as a part of the healing from loss and grief, so can the church continue to support families and friends through personal visits by phone calls, and/or virtual/videoconference conversations with groups? Can the church conduct a funeral service in the sanctuary with the minister and two to three family members present, and broadcast it live

for family and friends? Do you postpone the funeral until people can gather in-person?

21. Will the church host Summer activities, like VBS? If in person, what planning do you need to put protocols in place? If virtual, what planning protocols will that take (e.g., Zoom Room with sub-rooms for different ages, training on using Zoom and facilitating teaching virtually)?

Pastoral Care for the Church Members:

22. Are there ways that you can help families explore and discuss how difficult this quarantine time has been, and the additional strains it has fostered (personal relationships, finances, emotional or physical violence, job changes/loss)?

Church Finances:

23. What impact has the Virus had on church finances?
- A. What is your projected long-term financial picture?
 - B. What is the projected year-end impact?
 - C. What additional revenue streams are needed if there is a projected deficit?
 - D. Will the church apply for CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (deadline is June 30th, or until funds are spent)?
 - E. What additional expenses do you need to add to your budget that have surfaced since mid-March (e.g., technology, equipment, cleaning supplies)?
 - F. Whatever changes to the budget are needed, does the board or the full church have to vote for those changes?
24. What ministry opportunities have surfaced and what are the associated costs?