

**Shavertown United Methodist Church
Safety Restoration Plan in Response to COVID-19**



Revised July 2, 2020

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Summary of Four Step Re-entry Plan

Shavertown United Methodist Church looks forward to returning to in-person operations and worship, but we also recognize the need to follow a “step-up” philosophy. This includes making thoughtful and gradual changes until we are back to normal.

The five-step plan utilizes the recommendations given by national, state and local officials. As their recommendations change, our plan may change, too. If changes occur, we will communicate them with the church body.

We will make decisions on when to move to the next step based on recommendations from local officials and with input from our COVID-19 Advisory Board made up of members who are part of the church’s Trustees and SPRC. This team will divide into several sub teams to focus on:

- Building Issues
- Worship Concerns
- Christian Education
- Children’s Ministry
- Safety Plan

STEP ONE: ONLINE WORSHIP (Red Phase)

Under the “Stay Home, Work Safe” order, the church has limited activity and eliminated services and other church activities. During this step, we will employ:

- Online worship services
- Work from home for staff as possible.

STEP TWO: SMALL GROUPS (Yellow Phase)

As restrictions are loosened, current PA Restoration plan guidelines (Yellow Phase) indicate groups of 25 or fewer in number will be allowed. During this phase, we will employ:

- Online worship services
- Small groups including various committees
- Planning for reopening the church

If smaller groups decide to meet in-person, we ask they use all recommended guidelines given by officials (e.g., staying six feet away, wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, avoid touching of face, etc.).

STEP THREE: MEDIUM GROUPS (Green Phase)

As the new COVID-19 cases decrease, the county will move to the PA Restoration Plans Green Phase. In this phase larger groups (up to 250 or fewer in number) are allowed.

When it is deemed safe by local officials, we will resume worship services on campus employing social distancing. This will require us to cap attendance at each service at 80. During this phase, we will employ:

- Online worship services and/or worship services on campus that follow social distancing
- Online Bible studies and groups and/or group meetings that follow social distancing
- Guidelines for groups of 50 or fewer, as outlined above in Step Three
- If needed due to increased attendance, online worship reservations may be required
- Staggered service times to allow the building to be sanitized between each service
- Adjusted offering collection and Communion appropriately
- No coffee or refreshments
- Touch-free environments where possible (e.g., doors propped open, greeters' wave "hi" instead of using handshakes or hugs, etc.)
- Asking volunteers to wear gloves and masks
- No children's activities or childcare due to the difficulty of employing social distancing

STEP FOUR: NEW NORMAL (Green Phase)

As comfort and safety increase, we will resume more regular activities in addition to our worship services. At this time, it is difficult to predict what this new normal may include, but we anticipate things like:

- Continuing online worship services as needed
- Continuing online Bible studies and groups as needed
- A return to "normal" programming using recommended safety guidelines
- A return of children's activities and childcare
- A return of coffee and refreshment

General Safety Guidance

Social Distancing

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 we need to 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. In Pennsylvania, social distancing in Yellow Phase limits gatherings to 25 or less. In the green Phase it increases to 250.

This plan promotes 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 defines "close contact" as being about six (6) feet (approximately two (2) meters) from an infected person or within the room or care area of an infected patient for a prolonged period while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact also includes instances where there is direct contact with infectious secretions while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact generally does not include brief interactions, such as walking past a person.

Services and gatherings should be held in a large, well-ventilated area or outdoors, as circumstances and faith traditions allow.

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.

Physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, will be provided to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).

All meeting rooms, including the social hall and sanctuary were assessed for occupancy based on the social distancing guidelines. The meeting rooms will be set up to meet these guidelines prior to re-opening. Maximum capacity will be determined by how the room is set up and whether social distancing can be achieved between non-family members.

Personal protective equipment

Cloth face coverings

Face covers/masks are mandatory to use among staff and congregants at Shavertown UMC or participating in any meeting or gathering inside or outside during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. This is per Pennsylvania Governors order issued on April 15, 2020 and as revised in the order dated July 1, 2020.

Face coverings are most essential when social distancing is difficult. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. 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. Under PA Department of Health Guidance, an exception can be made if someone has an established health condition and can not wear a face covering/mask.

Gloves

Gloves are required to wear while someone is performing any cleaning or disinfecting within the church. Gloves are not required for any other activity but are available if someone would feel more comfortable with gloves.

Enhanced Hygiene

An important part of remaining virus free is to have good hygiene practices established for staff, congregants or visitors to the church. An adequate supply of hand sanitizer at the entrance to the church as well as in each meeting room and offices will provide the first line support for hand cleaning. Although effective, hand washing is a better alternative and is the preferred method. The following practices are recommended:

- 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.
- 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.
- Consider posting signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 and how to promote everyday protective measures icon, such as washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and properly wearing a face covering.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects in between use.
- Develop a schedule of increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected.
- 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.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety risk to children using the facility.
- Schedule services far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces between services.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.

Re-entry preparation

Communications

Clear, concise communication is essential can calm fears and endear our members to their church. Communication of what to expect when they come back is important so they will be prepared and that they will know the church is taking steps to ensure their safety. Changes that need to be conveyed include:

- chairs removed
- Bibles and hymnals removed
- pews roped off
- Sit where ushers tell them

- Reduced occupancy (may need to ask people to attend Saturday service.)
- Masks are required
- Parking set up
- Reduced entry and exit points
- Limited restroom use

Communications needs to occur with all staff, Sunday school teachers, and others in leadership roles, encouraging them to offer friendly reassurances to those in their sphere of influence that these are unusual times, but this partial return to normalcy is a good thing.

Need to remind the vulnerable populations, specifically seniors or those with underlying health concerns that they can continue to join virtually until their health allows them to return. Work needs to continue to ensure they remain plugged into the church and its ministries over the coming weeks.

When communicating with congregants, include information about what is being done to clean and disinfect your facilities. Use signage and announcements that outline what you're cleaning and frequency. Communicate the additional steps being taken to encourage hygiene. Discuss the following:

- Additional hand sanitizers
- Remind attendees of cough and handwashing etiquette
- Inform concerning changes to offering or communion
- Require the use of face coverings
- Encourage the use of gloves

Facebook, the Shavertown UMC website, YouTube, and email are all ways that can be deployed to keep the congregation informed. Use of a simple letter mailed to members is a welcome communication channel, especially for those who may still lack computers or smartphones. Set up regular frequency of communications so the people feel safe, and it encourage others to join the in-person worship experience as they are ready.

Sanctuary Preparation

The sanctuary needs to be set up to minimize touching and re-touching of articles by removing the following list from the sanctuary:

- Bibles
- Hymnals
- Pencils
- Sheet music
- Bulletins or any other items that may be passed from one person to another.

All frequently touched services need to be cleaned inside the sanctuary with an appropriate cleaner suitable for the surface to be cleaned. These areas include:

- Pews (including back of Pews where hands are often placed).
- Railings
- Door handles
- Lectern
- Pulpit
- Microphones and sound equipment

Other considerations include:

- Any musical equipment that is shared between congregants needs to have handles cleaned before and after each use.
- The church pews need to have any soft cushions removed and stored elsewhere.
- Appropriate signage will be placed to remind people on what practices to use and give direction to social distance and flow of people in and out of the sanctuary.

Cleaning protocols

Routine cleaning is the everyday cleaning practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment. Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, bathroom surfaces, and handrails, should be cleaned with soap and water or another detergent at least daily when facilities are in use. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. For example, certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as stairway railings, church pews, chairs, desks or counter tops should be cleaned and disinfected before each use. Cleaning removes dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but it reduces the number of germs on a surface.

It is important that the church has gloves, masks, disinfecting wipes and sprays as well as other cleaners, all of which are in short supply right now. Cleaning high-touch areas is especially important. [Brotherhood Mutual \(<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/general-health-and-injury-prevention/coronavirus-reopen-cleaning/> \)](https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/general-health-and-injury-prevention/coronavirus-reopen-cleaning/) offers tips listing some of the common surfaces that should be frequently addressed, including seats/pews, door handles, table or countertops, touch-screen electronics, restroom fixture handles, light switches, chairs in new mothers' rooms, changing tables, toys and bins, sinks and check-in stations.

For multiple worship services, leave time for disinfecting common surfaces between each service and to ensure people can maintain social distancing as they leave and enter the worship center.

Stepping up your cleaning and disinfecting practices can help minimize the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19 as you return to worship services. The coronavirus can be spread by touching a contaminated surface as it may be viable for hours to days on chairs, desks, pews,

counters, door handles, phones, computer keys, microphones, and more. Experts say that cleaning of surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in community settings. The Safety Plan will be revised as needed concerning revisions or updates to local and state government guidelines regarding when and how to get operations back to normal.

Cleaning Products

Using the right disinfecting product is important. It is expected that many existing disinfectants will be effective against the virus. The disinfection will be done in accordance with CDC Guidance using products from EPA's list of products that meet the criteria for use against coronaviruses.

CDC Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces:

If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

Hard surfaces such as metal and wood can be cleaned with products like Clorox non bleach disinfecting wipes.

An example of an effective disinfect is diluted household bleach solutions can be used. The surface must be an appropriate non-porous hard surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach should be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Specific Safety Guidance on Church Activities

Staff work and daily operations

During the yellow Phase work restoration for staff can start to resume. Consider how many days a week the staff person needs to be in the office and continue to look at work from home options for completing work. This would include conference calls or zoom type meetings to continue work.

Staff may consider daily temperature checks when reporting back in as an additional precaution. Small group meetings of less than 25 can be held if social distancing and masks protocols are followed.

In the case of any group meeting (defined as 3 or more) one person is expected to be designated as the COVID-19 Compliance Monitor. This role is responsible for the group adhering to the guidelines and protocols established in the plan. This includes social distancing, masks, and cleaning.

Each space shall be cleaned in between uses. It is the responsibility of the group to make sure the cleaners are available and must ensure all frequently touched surfaces have been cleaned and or disinfected. Due to the large surface area to be cleaned a group of volunteers will be requested to stay after a service and clean the sanctuary, Narthex and bathrooms.

Worker Personal Responsibilities

1. Employees need to take steps to protect themselves, and each other.
2. It is critical that individuals NOT report to the worksite while they are experiencing illness symptoms such as fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, dry cough, body aches, chills, or fatigue, or loss of sense of smell and/or taste (follow current CDC guidelines).
3. Workers should NOT return to work until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); And, at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
3. An individual contractor may require, in order to return to work after experiencing any of these symptoms, a doctor's note or a negative COVID-19 test result. If you feel sick, uncomfortable, or unsafe, please stay home.
4. If you feel healthy but:
 - Recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19
 - Stay Home and Monitor Your Health
 - Stay home until 14 days after your last exposure (Quarantine)
 - Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
 - If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
5. If you:
 - Have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or
 - Are waiting for test results, or

- Have cough, fever, or shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- Isolate Yourself from Others
- Stay home until it is safe to be around others.
- If you live with others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area and away from other people or animals, including pets. Use a separate bathroom, if available.

Small group meetings

Church committees and small bible study or adult Sunday school groups may return to the church. These groups need to follow social distancing wear masks and perform hygiene practices (clean often touched areas including the bathroom fixture following use.

Other groups that may use the church can consider returning. The groups remain small (<25) and must use all social distancing, hygiene and wear masks during the time at the church. In addition, cleaning of frequently touched items, including restroom facilities must be complete after the meeting.

Large gathering non-service

Large gatherings can occur once the County goes to Green under the PA Restoration Plan. In the Green phase Groups of up to 250 can assemble. Given the size of our congregation, most activities can return at this point, with possible exceptions including events where the public is invited. As with the small groups, they need to follow social distancing, wear masks and perform hygiene practices (clean often touched areas including the bathroom fixture following use. This becomes more difficult as the size of the group increases the frequency of restroom use and frequently touched items.

Church Service

Social distancing must be practiced from the moment a person or family arrives on campus until departure. This includes:

- Help control flow by allowing people to enter through only one door (door with ramp immediately behind the narthex) and exit through others. Placing greeters and ushers in this area to help funnel people into worship space can be helpful as they arrive. Families should be encouraged to arrive together and sit together to ensure churches can provide six feet of distance between families while maximizing the number of people in the worship service(s).
- Stay home until it is safe to be around others.
- To maintain social distancing, it is recommended that use of restrooms for emergency purposes as these will need to be cleaned between each person’s use.
- In the worship center, blocking off every other row helps aid in social distancing for ushers helping to seat people, leaving six feet of space between individuals or families. Tape, ropes or other materials can be used to signal a closed row. Each pew should have a 6-foot section marked on the floor to remind people about distance (unless in the same family).

- Ushers should seat members from front to back, alternating sides, to further maintain distance. (When dismissing, ushers should dismiss rows from back to front.)
- Families with three or more members will take an entire pew row. Those with less than three family members can split a pew while maintaining 6 feet between each other.

Based on calculations of the number of pews, skipping either pew, or keeping proper social distancing it is expected that the church can hold about 80 people. This does not include the Pastor, Music Director or liturgist. This number could be higher depending on the size of families that attend that day. If additional seating is required there are at least 7 seats that can be filled in the choir loft and still maintain proper distancing.

Other considerations

Training for Ushers and those that volunteer to clean

To make sure the ushers are clear on how to seat and dismiss people, a short training is required. The training will include proper social distancing protocol, and hygiene expectations.

Inservice information

As a substitute for bulletin's information that needs to be conveyed should be posted on the church's website or added to the pastor's announcements at the start of the service. Information needed as part of the service (prayers, song lyrics, bible verses can be projected on screens (if available).

Collection of Offerings

Offerings should be collected in a central location such as the Narthex or immediately inside the sanctuary. Those collecting and processing the offerings should wear gloves during this process.

Music

Music is an important part of the Shavertown UMC. During the return to service, music will be limited to the organ, piano, bells and chimes or any other instrumental play provided that social distancing can be arranged for any ensembles. Singing, in terms of any of the choirs will not be part of the return to service. Unless the individuals can be set up at six feet from each other and from any other congregant.

Tracking in person Worship Attendance

Tracking in person attendance needs to be instituted for each service. A sign in sheet that is completed by the ushers would ensure all attendees are accounted for each service. If someone becomes ill during the service, instruct them to leave the church or have them isolated in an office or other room with a door to help lessen chance for exposure. Following the person leaving, the office would need to be out of service for 24 hours and then a cleaning of the office could be performed.

For in person meetings, the compliance officer assigned to the meeting will collect the names, time and room used. This record will be retained for 14 days to aid in virus tracing if a confirmed COVID-19 case is determined for one or more of the attendees.

Nursery

No Nursery (for small child-care) is not allowed during Yellow Phases. A future determination is needed from the UMC Susquehanna Council prior to reinstating the nursery in Phase Green.

Second Wave Preparation

Over the last 220 years there have been 8 pandemics. In 7 of these 8, a second wave or dramatic increase in cases happened within 6 months of the first peak. If this trend were to continue, a second wave could be expected between October and December of 2020. It is critical to monitor public health updates and determine if a local or regional outbreak needs to change activity level back to small groups or even restoration of online services. The recovery teams are required to keep meeting and assess what worked well and what did not in case the second wave returns. This includes keeping a list of best practices learned from other churches.

Appendices

Appendix A – Return to Gathering Recommendations and Considerations Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church

As we prepare to re-imagine what Church might look like in the future, the following is a tool and starting point for discussion among your leadership. It is not meant to be all-inclusive. We are indeed, as the churches of the Susquehanna Conference, connected by Spirit, but we provide ministry in many different contexts. At this time, stay at home orders will be lifted in different areas of the state at different times and at differing phases. *That does not mean our church buildings will be able to reopen for worship.* It is imperative that all CDC guidelines, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania guidelines, local county and municipal guidelines, and directives from the Susquehanna Conference be followed.

Our values shape and inform our decisions as we continually re-evaluate and discern the best ways to love one another and do no harm. There will be a podcast offered by Grow, Equip and Connect on the Susquehanna Conference website that explores the values that should define our decisions.

As you prepare to gather once again, please be aware of the three phases for re-opening and the guidelines and group size restrictions the Pennsylvania government has put in place. It is imperative we continue to follow these directives. A complete description of the phased reopening can be found at <https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/#PhasedReopening>

RED PHASE

- Stay at home ordered.
- Gatherings of more than 10 prohibited.
- Church services and all non-essential ministries should not be conducted in person.
- Begin planning how to resume worship and ministries with safeguards in place.

YELLOW PHASE

- Stay at home restrictions lifted in favor of aggressive mitigation.
- Gatherings of more than 25 prohibited.
- Worship in groups of 25 or less, small group Bible studies, church office staff, church leadership, and ministries under 25 people could consider meeting in person during the yellow phase with all safety precautions in place.
- Continue planning for resuming worship and ministries with safeguards in place.

GREEN PHASE

- Aggressive mitigation orders lifted. Individuals must follow CDC & PA Department of Health Guidelines.
- Social distancing measure will likely still need to be maintained to keep people safe and healthy.
- Continue planning that will keep safeguards in place.

Communication is key in each phase of the re-gathering process. A checklist of questions and minimum recommendations for when it is safe to enter the yellow phase is provided for your leadership. It is suggested that leadership continue to use this document for planning through all phases.

WHAT TO DO NOW

	Who will lead this re-gathering process?
	Who should have input in the discussion?
	When will it be safe to return to worship?
	What precautions will we plan to take?
	How will you stay informed of CDC, PA, local, municipal and Conference guidelines?
	What will a safety plan include?
	Who will keep notes on best practices and what works, what doesn't?
	Who will lead the process for preparing the building?
	Who will lead the process for returning to the worship space?
	Who will lead the process for returning to Christian Education and Small Group ministries?
	Who will be responsible for communicating changing worship and gathering information?
	What are various means of communication that must be included?
	What other questions need to be asked? What other information do we need?

- Stay informed by checking these websites regularly for timelines, guidelines and protocols
 - Center for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - Commonwealth of Pennsylvania <https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/>
 - Susquehanna Conference <https://www.susumc.org/covid-19/>
- Prepare a plan for tracking in-person worship attendance. Prepare a safety plan if someone should become sick. Prepare a plan for communicating with those who may have come into contact with that individual while also maintaining privacy and pastoral care.
- Second Wave. We don't want to think about a second wave of COVID-19, but medical experts are saying this is a very real possibility. Continue to keep this in mind as you are making plans to move back into in-person worship and ministries. Continue to keep your re-gathering team in place. Keep good notes on what works and what has not. Keep a list of best practices you are hearing from other churches.

PREPARING YOUR CHURCH BUILDING FOR GATHERING

	Who is leading this process of preparing the building?
	What is your timeline for re-evaluation and on-going care?
	Who will be responsible for maintaining cleaning supplies, tissues, soap, hand sanitizer, etc.?
	How will you deep clean the entire church, paying special attention to preschool and children's areas; gathering areas; bathrooms; kitchens; places where germs are most likely to be transferred?
	How will you clean and sanitize before and after each gathering?
	Will you implement cleaning checklists for each area of the building?
	How can you allow for proper drying times between worship and events?
	Will you plan to clean and flush water systems that have not been in use?
	Will you plan to clean air ducts and heating systems that have not been in use?
	How will you deal with shortages of cleaning materials and resources?
	Will you have designated entrances, exits, building traffic patterns, sanitizing stations?
	How will you keep physical distancing? Use of tape, remove chairs, use cones, designation of pews for proper distancing, use of every other bathroom stall?
	How will your congregation know the building is safe and that safe practices are in place?
	What signage will you post throughout the building as reminders of protocols?
	What signage might you post indicating symptoms and urging people to stay home and seek medical attention if they have symptoms?
	What activities might need to be suspended, such as coffee hours and other gatherings where people might risk cross-contamination?
	How will you update your building use agreements to reflect the new realities of COVID-19?
	How will updated agreements be communicated and distributed to those who use the building?
	What other information do we need?

Resources:

- Susquehanna Conference Safety Committee Guidelines for Gradually Resuming Conference Operations
- Engle, Hambright & Davies <https://ehd-ins.com/covid-19-updates/>
- Cleaning and sanitizing products recommended by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html> Center for Disease Control
- <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces> National Institutes of Health

WORSHIP

	Who will lead this process of re-starting in-person worship?
	What is your timeline for re-evaluation and ongoing care?
	How will online and alternative types of worship continue to be offered?
	What will be the most critical “no-touch” safety practices to put in place for your worship space?
	What will phase one, phase two, phase three, etc. look like in your church context and as conditions change?
	How will you ensure physical distancing once on-site worship is permitted?
	How many people can your worship space hold if you are worshipping in family groups sitting 6 feet apart?
	Will services need to be shorter?
	Will the number of services need to change depending on church size? (Be sure to factor in new people in your community who will be worshipping with you for the first time).
	What plan is in place for when you’ve reached maximum numbers and more people show up?
	How will you help people maintain safe space when entering and exiting?
	With singing considered high risk (even with masks), how will you offer music in worship?
	How will you discourage congregating before or after worship?
	Who will be responsible for reminding people of safe protocols?
	What safe practices will be implemented for hospitality and how will hospitality teams (greeters, ushers) be trained on safe practices?
	How will you provide masks for those who do not bring their own from home?
	Where will hand sanitizing stations be placed?
	How will you communicate safe practices to those who will attend worship?
	How will you receive the offering?
	How will you provide communion once safe to do so?
	How will you use print materials (bulletins, hymnals, Bibles, following safety precautions?
	What cleaning procedures will be in place for microphones and tech equipment?
	What safety precautions will be in place for weddings, funerals, confirmation and baptism?
	What other information do we need?

Minimum Recommendations for Safe Practices During the Yellow Phase:

- High risk individuals should continue to shelter in place until they feel it is safe to return.
- Continue all online and alternative worship opportunities.
- Adhere to group size restrictions.
- Ask congregants to bring masks and sanitizer from home and provide masks and sanitizing stations for those who do not have their own.
- Remove pew hymnals, Bibles, pencils, attendance pads, welcome cards, etc. and rely upon audio visual, verbal instructions, or if you must have bulletins have one person with gloves distribute printed bulletins.
- Offerings can be placed in bins at the entrances of spaces. Those collecting and counting the offering will need to do so following guidelines for safe physical distancing and protocols. Continue online giving opportunities.
- The risk of offering a nursery is very high. Plan for families to worship together.
- The risk for singing is high due to producing droplets/aerosolized particles.
- The risk for choirs is high. Plan not to have a choir sing.

- If you do some form of children’s time during worship, continue to do so but without inviting children to come forward or gather together.
- Consider suspending in-person communion or offer alternatives, such as bringing bread and juice from home or using prepackaged communion elements to be picked up individually on the altar rail.
- Weddings, funerals, confirmations can take place by keeping within the group size restrictions for gathering and observing physical distancing protocols.
- Baptisms. Children and infants should remain in their parents arms. If more than one person is being baptized, provide separate water containers for each individual baptism. Pastors will need to use hand sanitizer between multiple baptisms. Parents and pastors should not walk the child up and down the aisle as part of the celebration.
- Parking lot worship could be a consideration depending on maximum gathering restrictions.
 - Communicate safety plan and best practices.
 - Consider using every other or every third parking space.
 - Use volunteers or signage to direct flow of entrance and exit and parking, following physical distancing guideline at all times.
 - No one should leave vehicles for any reason.
 - No bathroom facilities.
 - No playground
 - No exchanges of any materials of any kind.
 - Only FM transmitters should be used so that car windows do not need to be open reducing the risk of airborne particles.

CHILDREN AND SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Who will lead the process of re-starting children and small group ministries?
What is your timeline for re-evaluation and on-going care?
What safety precautions will need to be in place in order for parents to feel they can return with their children?
What additional guidelines need to be in place in order to ensure safe practices with children (i.e., procedures for drop off and pick up; number of volunteers/staff needed to care for children who may experience more separation anxiety than usual; ensuring volunteers/staff have not been exposed to COVID-19?
What ministry can be done off-site or outside while maintain group size restrictions?
What will VBS look like this year?
How will you continue to offer online opportunities for learning and gathering?
What safety precautions must be in place before home, hospital and nursing home visitation can begin again?
What safety precautions need to be considered for transportation and church-owned vehicles?
Who will communicate different phases of startup and how will information be communicated?
What additional information do we need?

Minimum Recommendations for Safe Practices during the Yellow Phase:

- Consider suspending nursery, children and youth in-person ministries until public schools are in session.
- Daycares that have received a waiver to operate in the building must follow all guidelines.
- Homebound visitation should not resume while nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospitals continue to be on shut-down. When resumed, respect the wishes of the family and observe all required protocols.

- Mission trips will be unwise to continue for some time. When safe to do so, consider local mission opportunities. Keep groups small following all group size restrictions, physical distancing and protocols.

CHURCH BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

	Who will lead this process of re-opening office operations and administration?
	What is your timeline for re-evaluation and on-going care?
	What is your plan for timeline and implementation for office staff to return to full operation?
	How will you ensure all surfaces (phone, copier, keyboards) are cleaned after each use?
	How will you create a plan for committee meetings and building rentals to return to full operation following group size limitations and physical distancing protocols?
	What additional information is needed?

Minimum Recommendations for Safe Practices during the Yellow Phase:

- Staff could begin working in the office a maximum of one to two days following all physical distancing guidelines and protocols. Larger staff numbers could alternate days of work.
- Leadership teams of less than 25 could consider meeting in person wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, or continue meeting online.
- Consider allowing building use/renters in groups of less than 25 back in if they are able to observe all protocols and you are able to accommodate cleaning needs. Consider one group per day/evening.

Additional Resources:

Clergy Coaching Network: Guidance for the New Normal

<https://clergycoachingnetwork.blog/2020/04/22/guidance-for-the-new-normal/>

24 Questions Your Church Should Answer: <https://kenbraddy.com/2020/04/18/20-questions-your-church-should-answer-before-people-return/>



Church Reopening Guidelines During COVID-19 Pandemic: Green Phase

What Can My Church Do in the Green Phase?

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established a three-phase process toward the reopening of businesses and nonprofits: red, yellow, and green.

The Green Phase does not mean “full speed ahead.” This phase has some specific restrictions, because the risks of transmitting COVID-19 remain.

In Preparation:

- > Establish a task force to develop a plan.
- > Research federal, state, and local guidance.
- > Consider transitioning in phases. Church activities can be resumed more gradually than the state phases require. Gradual reopening can further slow the spread of the virus.
- > Determine which ministry and missions are essential, and whether these can be offered safely and while using the best safety practices.
- > Create a plan with clear steps.
- > Clean and disinfect frequently touched services and shared items. Find guidelines here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- > Be sure to communicate the plan *frequently* to worshipers, staff, and those who use the building.
- > Find additional important considerations here: susum.org/covid-19

In Gathered Worship:

- > Limit gatherings (worship, fellowship, and other) to 250 people.
- > Maintain six-foot distances between each person. This includes bathrooms and hallways. Mark off space in the pews using ropes, ribbons, painter’s tape, or other methods, if that will help. If you have moveable chairs in the sanctuary, arrange those carefully.
- > Thoroughly clean after each service. See above link to CDC guidelines.
- > Require all worshipers (over age two) and leaders to wear face coverings.
- > Make worship child-and-family friendly rather than offer nursery service.
- > Worship leaders should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- > Provide no-touch trash cans.
- > Avoid using items that many people will touch, such as hymnals, bulletins, Bibles, and offering plates. Project the service content or guide the congregation while leading. Invite people to drop their tithes and offerings into a large basket that you provide.
- > Forego singing at this time. The virus is spread through droplets that can be generated when speaking, singing, coughing, and sneezing.



Shavertown United Methodist Church

163 N Pioneer Ave, Shavertown, PA 18708
Pastor Robin Baer (570) 675 – 3616

We are pleased to announce the return to in-person worship on Saturday, June 27 and Sunday, June 28, 2020. In-person worship is dependant on Luzerne County remaining in Phase Green. The reopening committee wants to update you as to the changes that will be in place for your safety. These guidelines follow both the CDC recommendations and those set forth by the Susquehanna Conference.

General Guidelines:

- a. If you have symptoms of Covid-19 such as fever and/or cough, please stay home.
- b. High risk individuals are encouraged to attend the smaller Saturday service or join us for our online worship.
- c. Social distancing is required. Church property will be marked with 6 feet marks with yellow tape to help maintain requirement. No congregating on church property before or after service.
- d. Masks are required except for those under the age of 2 or as designated by the CDC as exceptions.
- e. Masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer will be available when entering the narthex.
- f. Access is limited to the narthex, sanctuary, and bathrooms. These areas will be disinfected before and after each use. Individuals using the bathroom are responsible for following disinfecting procedures as posted. Parents are encouraged to accompany children to bathroom.
- g. Service times will remain the same, however, we encourage you to arrive early; seating will begin at 5:00 pm on Saturday and 9:00 am on Sunday.
- h. You will be greeted at the ramp door, no other doors are available to enter or exit out of.
- i. Greeters will take attendance as you enter, should we need to contact you.

Seating:

- a. Seating is limited to meet the social distancing requirement. Therefore, you will be welcomed on a “first come – first served” basis.
- b. You will be seated by ushers; every other pew will be used.
- c. Families or groups who are able to sit together are asked to enter the church together.
- d. It is possible with groups of one or two, that opposite ends of the same pew could be used, however, there must be 6 feet between the groups. Larger groups will have the entire pew available to them.
- e. Let the usher know if you have hearing or sight issues; they will sit you towards the front of church.
- f. Ushers will direct exiting the pews one at a time, starting at the back of the church.

Prayer Requests: Prayer requests can be made by calling the church office or be shared during service.

Bulletins: Bulletins will not be handed out. Information will be available on a screen in the sanctuary.

Offering: Offering plates will be at the back of the sanctuary to be used when entering or leaving service.

Music: Although the congregation will not sing, special music will be provided by instrumentalists, small singing groups, and bell and chime choirs.

Children’s Service: There will be a children’s service but children will not come to the front of the church.

Communion: There will be no communion at first. An announcement will be made when it will be available.

Nursery: The nursery will not be available at first. An announcement will be made when it will be reopening.

We are looking forward to offering in-person worship again, but are encouraging everyone to use their best judgment on whether they should attend. The online service will continue to be offered and will be available by Sunday afternoons at shavertownumc.com.

Thank you for your understanding and patience during this challenging time. If you have concerns or questions, please contact SUMC at shavertownumc@susumc.org. The complete SUMC Safety Plan is available at the church office and on our website.

Many blessings,
The SUMC Reopening Committee

If you travel to an area considered a “hot spot” please self-quarantine 14 days before attending service.

Appendix D - Children and Small Group Ministries

EVENT	RED	YELLOW	GREEN
Nursery	No	No	Must meet guideline requirements of number of people in room, no masks on ages 2 and under, masks for older children must be required unless parents waive requirement in writing; less toys available, in bins to keep separate; toys and room to be disinfected following safety plan and CDC guidelines; parents wait in designated area and children will be brought to location
Children's Time	No	No	Children will remain in seats with family, no snacks or gifts given, help given to Pastor Robin as needed if things need to be brought around for children to see
Acolytes	No	No	Children will enter from the side door of sanctuary using the disinfected lighting tool; no robes or crosses worn; a pew will be reserved for the acolyte and their family in the front of the church
Children's Bulletins	Provided in e-mail to follow along with online service	Provided in e-mail to follow along with online service	Provided in e-mail to be printed and brought to service if the family chooses; send reminder with e-mail that no pencils will be provided
Snack/Gift	No	No	No, notify parents in e-mail that snack not being provided
Children's Choir	Zoom practices provided	Zoom practices provided, children within the same family can record music for online service	Children within the same family can perform; first two rows of pews will be blocked off to protect attendees
Children's Bells/Chimes	Zoom practices provided	Zoom practices provided; can record music for online service with masks and social distancing	Practices in person with masks and social distancing, can perform at service; firsts two rows of pews will be blocked off; bells will be disinfected, and participants will not touch cloth/foam that bells are kept on; bells will be covered when not in use
Sunday School	Lessons provided through e-mail	Lessons provided through e-mail	Students will be divided up to allow social distancing guidelines to be met in each room; papers will not be handed out; no snacks provided; students will be released one classroom at a time and parents will wait in designated area for pick up
Youth Group	No	No	No, program has not started yet; if started once out of phases then modifications will be made for phase green based on safety plan
VBS	No	Yes, see green	Families will pick up supplies in a drive-thru kickoff event, participants will have masks on and wear gloves when handling materials for families; videos will be provided online to watch at home
Back to School Bash	No	Yes, see green	Families will pick up supplies at a drive-thru event; participants will wear masks and gloves when handing out material to families
Rally Day	No	No	Tables will be set up in social hall; Sunday School teachers will fill out information
Trunk or Treat	No	Yes, see green	Families will pick up candy at a drive-thru event; participants will wear masks and gloves when handling anything given to families
Christmas Musical	No	No	Play can be done, but not a musical
Small Group Ministries	No	No	Groups will have to fill out form requesting the use of a room, it will be determined what room they can use based on maximum number of participants; groups must take attendance and provide names to church after each meeting; groups must assign a P.C.O (Pandemic Compliance Officer) to each meeting that will make sure guidelines are being followed Small groups meeting in a location other than the church will follow the guidelines of that establishment and need to provide that information to their group members before meeting



COVID-19: Recommended Preventative Practices and FAQs for Faith-based and Community Leaders

PLEASE NOTE: The following recommended preventative practices and answers are in response to common questions we have received. They are based on what is currently known [about the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Should you have questions that are not listed below, please contact the Partnership Center at partnerships@hhs.gov or 202-260-6501. We will do our best to respond in a timely fashion and will continue to update this document as further questions and information come to our attention.

Primary Resources

- **For updates on the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) [dedicated website](#). Also available in [Spanish](#).
- **For local information and for recommendations on community actions** designed to limit exposure to COVID-19, check with your [state and local public health authorities](#).
- **For guidance and instruction on specific prevention activities** related to your community’s tradition and practices, refer to your national and regional denominations.

The Role of Faith-based and Community Leaders

Faith-based and community leaders continue to be valuable sources of comfort and support for their members and communities during times of distress, including the growing presence of COVID-19 in different parts of the country. As such, **these leaders have the unique ability to address potential concerns, fears, and anxieties** regarding COVID-19. Additionally, by reiterating simple hygienic precautions and practices, these **leaders can broadly promote** helpful information, managing fear and stigma, and restoring a sense of calm into the lives of those in their care.

Such leaders are also poised — through their acts of service and community relationships — to reach vulnerable populations with essential information and assistance. These acts of service are an essential part of the safety net for the vulnerable in their communities.

Recommended Preventative Actions

1. Follow CDC Recommendations

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Currently, no vaccine exists to prevent COVID-19. Communities are encouraged to follow CDC recommendations to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases — including the flu:

- **Stay home when you are sick**, except to get medical care.
- **Cover your coughs** and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds** — especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**.
- **Avoid touching your face** with unwashed hands, especially your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Thoroughly and repeatedly clean high-contact surfaces** and objects.
- **Review your process for planning events**, programs, and services. Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services.
- **Identify space in your facility** to separate individuals who may become sick and cannot leave immediately.
- **Stop any stigma related to COVID-19** by knowing the facts and by sharing them with others in your community.

2. Follow Guidance for Prevention and Preparedness Activities

- Review the CDC’s [“Interim Guidance: Get Your Community- and Faith-Based Organizations Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\).”](#)
- Check with [your state and local health authorities](#). Public health officials may recommend community actions designed to limit exposure to COVID-19, depending on the risk of an outbreak or the severity of an outbreak.
- Visit the CDC, HHS, and Partnership Center social media sites for the latest information and access to downloadable signage for your facilities.
 - Twitter | CDC: [@CDCgov](#); HHS: [@HHSGov](#); and CFOI: [@PartnersforGood](#)
 - Facebook | CDC: [@CDCgov](#); HHS: [@HHSGov](#); and CFOI: [@HHSPartnershipCenter](#)
 - Instagram | CDC: [@CDCgov](#) and HHS: [@HHSGov](#)
- Additional and more specific recommendations may be found on the websites of various national denominations, faith groups, and community service organizations, such as:
 - Ensure community contact lists are up-to-date and that ‘calling trees’ — or other practices to account for individuals who may be living alone, elderly, and vulnerable — are in place;
 - Consider how your organization can use technology to make the service or event available online. Consider partnering with other communities with existing technological capacity;
 - Consider how community and liturgical practices can be adapted to minimize hand contact (e.g., see FAQs below regarding greetings and objects the community collectively handles);
 - Plan ways to continue essential services if onsite operations are scaled back temporarily. Provide web- and mobile-based communications and services, if possible. Increase the use of email, conference calls, video conferencing, and web-based seminars;
 - Make sanitizing products available;
 - Consider suspending the use of religious rituals and traditions (e.g., draining baptismal fonts, holy water stations, and vessels used for ritual washing), if present;
 - Conduct care visits by phone or virtually, especially if the individuals are in quarantine, isolation, or are taking precautions by staying at home;
 - Acknowledge this as a time of heightened stress and anxiety for the community, and respond with practices appropriate to your organization’s mission or faith tradition, like prayer;

- Minimize panic and stigma by educating communities, preparing for disruptions in service, and taking thoughtful preventative measures; and
- Establish the routine cleaning of sanctuaries, food service areas, and other communal spaces.

3. Make Plans that Prepare and Protect Your Community and Those Whom You Serve

- Review regularly your national and regional communications for guidance and instruction on specific prevention activities relative to your community.

□ Here's a suggested planning outline:

- **FIRST: Make Plans to Stay Connected.**
 - Ensure community contact lists are up-to-date and that 'calling trees' — or other practices to account for individuals who may be living alone, elderly, and vulnerable — are in place;
 - Ensure there is a clear process for communicating the "connection plan" to the community; and
 - Think about what would be necessary to stay connected to the community virtually (e.g., worship gatherings and community groups).

- **SECOND: Make Plans to Provide Ongoing Care and Services.**
 - Ask what plans are in place to care for community members, especially in cases where individuals live alone or are in quarantine or isolation. For example, leaders could make plans to call families during the week should the community be confined to their homes;
 - Prepare for leadership coverage in case staff become ill;
 - Protect workers who clean and maintain religious facilities and fellowship centers from exposure to the virus and other workplace hazards, such as disinfectants used for cleaning, and train them on how to do their jobs safely, use any necessary personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves), etc. Consider recommendations from the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) and [CDC's cleaning/disinfection guidance](#);
 - Pay special attention to nursery and childcare facilities. Ensure children's areas (including toys) are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use; and
 - Make plans to live-stream your service or other events, if appropriate.

- **THIRD: Make Plans to Maintain Operational Continuity, Support Staff, and Those Whom You Serve.**
 - Consider any necessary preparations to handle the business and operations of the community;
 - Consider strategies to address the ongoing financial needs of staff: employee payroll, tele-work accommodations, etc. Especially consider staff who depend on hourly wages and may lack health insurance;
 - Keep food pantries well stocked and include cleaning and sanitizing products; and
 - Learn how to conduct small and large meetings by electronic means. Consider how to continue relationships and classroom activities, such as mentoring or ESL classes.

- **FOURTH: Make Plans to Partner.**
 - Consider how the resources of your community can assist with the special needs of the vulnerable and/or isolated populations by collaborating with service agencies in your area. As an example, a faith community could establish a collaboration with a local school to support students who rely on the school meals program if the school closes;

- Communities with more advanced technological assets (teleconferencing, established systems to live-stream events, etc.) may partner with other entities to help stay connected; and
- Consider how your community might partner with local public health officials in providing the most up-to-date information and guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions

• What Are the Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19?

- Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to [severe illness and death](#) for confirmed COVID-19 cases. The following symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath

• Should We Have a Gathering at All? How Close Does an Infection Need to Be to Our Community to Consider Cancelling Our Gathering?

- Check with your [state and local health authorities](#) frequently for the latest information. Public health officials may ask you to modify, postpone, or cancel events if it is necessary to limit exposure to COVID-19. Also, consider ways to connect with vulnerable members of your community in ways that protect them from exposure to other people.
- Review [“Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission.”](#)
- Use the [CDC’s Guidance on Mass Gatherings](#) as a guide for reviewing your community’s calendar and to make decisions on *which* events may need to be canceled and by *when*.
- Track efforts by the federal government, the following websites have been launched:
 - English: www.U.S.A.gov/Coronavirus

• Should We Greet One Another as Usual? Shaking Hands, Kissing Cheeks, etc.?

- Identify how your community may greet one another in ways that reduce any potential spread of viruses, including COVID-19. For example, provide direction to those gathered to replace hugs with elbow touches. Consider recommending that members not hug or touch one another, but offer hand signals like a peace sign or the [American Sign Language sign for “I Love You.”](#)
- Greeters at all gatherings should be especially aware and refrain from offering handshakes. As one community noted, “Greeters can model hospitality with their words and their smiles.”

• What Should I Tell People Who Are Concerned?

- Reassure them that your faith- or community-based organization, as well as local, state, and national authorities, is taking all necessary precautions to ensure their health and safety. **Your response can soothe concerns** and create an atmosphere of calm. The best way to prevent illness is to practice routine and common-sense hygiene practices. These everyday practices also help to prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including the flu:
 - **Stay home when you are sick**, except to get medical care.
 - **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue** and then throw the used tissue in the trash.

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**.
- **Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands**, especially your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Clean high-contact surfaces and objects thoroughly and repeatedly.**
- Leaders may find it helpful to review the guidance provided by the CDC in its [“Interim Guidance: Get Your Community- and Faith-Based Organizations Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\).”](#)
- Check with your state and local health authorities to learn if your community has experienced a COVID-19 outbreak.

● **How Can We Advise the Elderly, Those with Special Health Considerations, Their Caregivers, and Other High-Risk Populations?**

- Provide special consideration in communicating risk to vulnerable populations in your community, including [older adults](#) and others with access and/or functional needs. Assign, or encourage those whom you serve to seek out, a “buddy” who will check in on and help care for them, should they get sick.
 - Make plans to stay connected. Ensure community contact lists are up-to-date and that ‘calling trees’ — or other practices to account for individuals who may be living alone, elderly, and vulnerable — are in place.
 - Convey ways they can stay connected via virtual worship, gatherings, and staff and leadership meetings.
 - Ensure there are clear means to communicate any “connection plans” with them.

● **What Should I Do if Someone at a Community Gathering Says They Are Feeling Sick?**

- Identify space in your facility or event to separate people who may become sick and may not be able to leave immediately.
- Designate a separate bathroom for those who are feeling sick. Develop a safe plan for cleaning the room regularly.
- Isolate the individual immediately from staff and participants.
- Assist the person in **CALLING AHEAD** to their health care professional if they have a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing. Tell them to avoid taking public transportation, ride-shares, and taxis.
- People with confirmed COVID-19, with a loved one in the home with a confirmed case, or those experiencing symptoms should remain under home isolation. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with health care providers and state and local health departments.
- For more information: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html.

● **Is Information About COVID-19 Available in Spanish?**

- The following website provides a wide range of information on COVID-19 in Spanish: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index-sp.html
- Los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC) tienen información en español sobre COVID-19 en su sitio web en www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index-sp.html

● **Does the Virus Live on Surfaces (e.g., Books or Shared Offering Plates)?**

- It may be possible to be exposed to COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes; however, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Review the CDC's ["How COVID-19 Spreads."](#)

- **Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects several times daily** (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, cabinet handles, smart phones, and keyboards) using an appropriate cleaner to minimize the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in your community. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list

of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

- If an object is frequently touched, for example as a part of religious observance, it should be cleaned, as appropriate within the religious tradition, after each use.

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent and water prior to disinfection.

- Consider ways your community can reduce the number of objects the community collectively handles.

- For example, consider no longer passing offering plates down the row; instead, place the offering plate on stands and ask people to leave their offering. Remind those who oversee and administer offerings, or similar items and elements, to wash their hands after administration or use.

- Organizations may also consider removing shared books and encouraging people to bring their own.

□ **What Type of Items Should We Have in Our Emergency Preparedness Kit?**

- Consider having supplies on hand, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, extra tissues, and trash baskets.

- Refer to the CDC's ["Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities"](#) for additional information about supplies and materials.