



# COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES, WEDDINGS, AND FUNERALS

These guidelines are based on recommendations from the CDC, to help communities of faith continue their mission while keeping their staff and congregations safe, and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- City of Springfield order: [www.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirusresponse](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirusresponse)
- Greene County order: [www.greenecountymo.gov](http://www.greenecountymo.gov)

## General Guidance

- Inside the Springfield city limits, the amount of people must be limited to 50% of the building's occupancy.
- Consider whether gatherings may need to have attendance limited or be held virtually if physical distancing is difficult.
- Modify all gatherings to incorporate social distancing measures.
- Consider holding services and gatherings in a large, well-ventilated area or outdoors.
- Offer multiple services to encourage a greater chance of social distancing.
  - There should be at least a four-hour gap between the end of one in-person service, and the beginning of the next in-person service. The facility should be cleaned between services, in accordance with CDC cleaning and disinfection guidance.
- Have a plan to divert or delay entrance of people if capacity limits are reached.
- Post signs at entrances asking sick people not to enter the building.

- Screen members for [symptoms](#) prior to service. Anyone with those symptoms must stay home.
- Ensure doors are propped open or have greeters hold them open until service begins and when it ends.
- Continue to post signs encouraging hand washing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes).
- Encourage staff and congregants who are at higher risk for severe illness to participate virtually, if possible.
- Consider temporarily removing frequently touched/shared objects. Encourage congregants to bring their own worship aids such as, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts and other bulletins, or other items commonly passed or shared among congregants.
- Avoid handing out bulletins or announcements; show them on a screen and/or email to members prior to service.
- Consider a stationary collection box, the mail, or electronic methods of collecting regular financial contributions instead of shared collection trays.
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee, instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
- Avoid food offerings / communion when it is being shared from common dishes.
- Postpone or cancel trips that could expose staff, volunteers, or members to potential community spread of COVID-19. Persons returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow guidance they have received from health officials.

## Physical Distancing Guidance

- Practice physical distancing of 6 feet in all areas. Only allow as many people to enter that the building can accommodate while maintaining physical distancing.
- Designate one-way traffic within the building.
- Post signs with clear instructions of steps employees and patrons should take to maintain social distancing.
  - Block off areas or tape off areas in all rooms to ensure 6 feet of physical distancing.

- Encourage non-contact greetings, such as nodding, bowing or waving. Avoid holding or shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.
- When physical distancing is not feasible, encourage the use of face coverings.
- Ensure proper spacing between attendees:
  - Keep at least two empty seats (or six feet separation) between parties in any row, except as follows:
    - Two or more members of the same household can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats (or six feet separation) empty on either side.
    - Two individuals who are not members of the same household but who are attending together can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats (or six feet separation) empty on either side.
  - Alternate rows between attendees (every other row left empty). Or remove pews or seating to ensure distancing.
- If bathrooms are in use, have greeters ensure handwashing and physical distancing is being followed.
- Consider suspending choirs / musical ensembles or limiting the number of members to allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Limit the gathering size in Sunday school/small groups/daycare
  - Designate a drop off/ pick up area for children, where only the teacher or leader is taking them to the classroom

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance**

- Routine cleaning and disinfecting should be done between each service (e.g. chairs, pews, restrooms, music stands, microphones, drums, pianos/organs, headphones, etc.) as well as high touch surfaces (e.g. tables, workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, doorknobs, etc.)
- Encourage everyone to wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices.

- Have hand sanitizer stations throughout the building.

## Employee Health Guidance

- Health screen staff upon arrival:
  - Self-monitor for [signs/symptoms](#) of COVID-19
  - Design a protocol for reporting self-monitoring before beginning shift.
  - Consider use of touchless infrared thermometers to check temperature of each staff member before service.
  - If employee is ill, require them to return home and stay home if they are sick.
- Discourage sharing of tools/equipment and workstations/areas between staff.
  - Avoid passing around a microphone or assign microphones to specific people.
  - Do not share choir robes. Robes should be cleaned after each use.
- Implement flexible sick leave and related flexible policies and practices for staff.
- Stagger shifts for the AV/Tech teams.

## Drive-in Services

### Drive-in Services (Attendees)

- Cars must be parked in every other parking spot or at least 9 feet apart.
- Vehicles should contain only members of a single household and must not exceed vehicle occupancy. Do not bring your neighbors or others outside of your household.
- Participants may not interact physically with staff or participants in other vehicles. (This includes, but is not limited to, collecting donations by basket or plate.)
- Cars may have windows down, however, no interaction with others outside of their vehicles may occur.
- No one may exit a vehicle at any time.

### Drive-in Services (Staff)

- Audio and visual broadcast must be maintained in a way to allow for participants to stay in their car and cannot exceed allowable noise levels for the community.
- Traffic flow for services may not impede the regular flow of public streets. Plans should be in place for possible traffic congestion issues.
- Modify the method for collecting regular financial contributions as to not pass a collection tray or basket. Examples: Online, Mail, Drop-Box
- Modify regular communion practices. Encourage participants to bring their own communion elements.
- Bathrooms are closed except for emergencies to limit congregating.
- Staff must be at least six feet apart from one another at all times.

## **Additional Resources:**

- [National Funeral Directors Association](#)