

COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan  
for  
[Church name]  
[Date]

This plan template was developed to support implementation of public health activities required to minimize the spread of COVID19 at [Church name] and was informed by CDC Guidance. This template was designed with basic concepts and will require customization specific to each church. Steps may have been included or omitted in this template which will require the church to modify this plan according to their unique facility, mission, and activities. Examples found within this template have been provided for illustrative purposes and may not apply to each facility.

**Developed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## [Church Name] Plan

[Church name] is committed to providing a safe and healthy facility for our staff, members, and visitors. This plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure we implement strategies and procedures to preserve public health. It is expected that the entire church will have a role in implementing this plan to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 within our facility and our community that would result in a disruption to our mission. Therefore, all persons in our facility will be expected to comply with all aspects of this plan. The church leadership and council have full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

This plan has been developed with church staff and members by [include how employees were involved or their concerns heard and integrated into the plan]. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [name state] Department of Health, [name association/organization/governing body, e.g. ECLA] and [name state orders] have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate including:

- Hygiene, cleaning, and disinfecting;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Controls for social distancing;
- Housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfection and decontamination;
- Communications and training that will be provided to persons on-site; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

This preparedness and response plan assume the following:

1. [Church name] will follow guidance from the [state] Governor, the [state] Department of Health, and from [association/organization/governing body].
2. [Church name] personnel will fall into different disease risk categories and decisions for return to the facility will be made in accordance with medical and public health guidance for risk stratification (e.g. age, health status). [Church name]'s role is not to determine the risk level of individuals; rather the church leadership should ensure that individuals can make their own informed choices and be supported.
3. [Church name] personal and activities resumption will occur in a phased approach and comply with established guidance provided in this plan.
4. The COVID19 situation will evolve and [Church name] will remain adaptable and nimble to the dynamic environment. The baseline level of risk for those working and using our facility will change as restaurants and retail businesses reopen, schools reopen, etc., requiring a reassessment of what level of resumption and precautions are appropriate.
5. Those functions that can practically stay at home to complete work will do so until [Church name] is fully opened to minimize large gatherings.

6. Social distancing, wearing of masks or other appropriate PPE, hand-washing, and disinfection of surfaces are key factors to reducing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
7. Large gatherings are unlikely to be safe over the next several months. Worship services, and other large gatherings should be carried out online.
8. Personal responsibility is key to safe operations and the avoidance of disease transmission. Educational materials will be developed for staff, members, and visitors to the [Church name] facility.

## COVID-19 Plan Management

The COVID-19 church coordinator(s) is [name of coordinator] and is responsible for COVID-19 assessment and implementation of this plan with [name supporting staff, committees]. All staff in the facility will be provided with the coordinator's name and how to contact the coordinator with any COVID-19 concerns. [Describe how workers will be able to contact the coordinator]. Infection control and occupational safety and health plans will apply to anyone working in or visiting the church (e.g., all staff, members, and visitors).

- The church has reached out to state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals and established ongoing communications to make sure they are getting relevant and up-to-date information concerning COVID-19.

Date contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

State and/or local public health official: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

- The church coordinator(s) and staff leadership are aware of and will follow all applicable regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Federal guidelines: [List reference here]

State guidelines: [List reference here]

Local guidelines: [List reference here]

Affiliation guidelines: [List reference here]

- Facility assessments to identify COVID-19 risks and prevention strategies should be done periodically as part of sound occupational health and public health practice. This plan will be reviewed every [add frequency] to ensure effectiveness.

## Facility Public Health Measures

Infection prevention measures are being implemented at our facility in accordance with public health guidance and best practices.

### Handwashing

Anyone in the [Church name] facility is instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on-site, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. [Describe where hand-sanitizers will be placed in the facility]

- A “Clean Your Hands!” poster are located in all restrooms providing proper hand washing methods. Posters are available from CDC and state departments of health.
- In occupied areas, custodial staff are checking and replenishing soap dispensers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer stations at a minimum of once per day, and more often in heavily trafficked public spaces

### Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Everyone is asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face—in particular their mouth, nose, and eyes—with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of in the trash and individuals should wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette reminders appear on posters and tissues and trash receptacles are readily available.

- The CDC “Stop the Spread of Germs” poster are posted in all building lobbies and other common areas.
- Tissues in common areas, including [Describe locations where tissues will be placed].
- Employees are expected to wear cloth face coverings (masks) in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Individuals may bring their own mask, or [Church name] may order them staff.

### Social distancing

Everyone entering the facility is asked to practice social distancing on public health guidance and best practices. These measures may be adjusted according to phases of this preparedness and response plan.

## Remote Work and Adjusted Onsite Hours

[Church name] has implemented the following procedures and practices for remote work and adjusted hours. All staff will meet with their supervisor to determine an individual plan for work location based on responsibilities and risk levels.

- Telework is approved and expected for all persons who can accomplish their primary duty functions from home.
- Staff are provided guidance and training to work remotely. [Describe information related to telework to include but not limited to how to access training and the point of contact for any issues related to teleworking].
- Equipment is available for staff members to complete their assigned responsibilities and tasks. Equipment questions should be directed to [Describe where equipment questions should be directed].
- Flexible hours and staggered shifts are available to minimize the number of persons in the facility at one time. [Describe the process to request and receive approval for flexible hours and staggered shifts].

## Onsite Work

Staff, members, and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas where six feet separation cannot be maintained. Staff, members, and visitors are required to wear masks at all times. Masks may be removed when staff are in their personal offices and where six feet of separation is feasible.

- Shared staff offices are assessed and where feasible staff are reassigned to other working areas or alternate hours to maintain social distancing. [Describe how shared staff offices have been reassigned or six feet social distancing achieved in shared spaces].
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use. Wipes must be immediately disposed in the trash after use.
- In areas where shared workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes are available to clean prior to and after use, disposing of wipes in the trash.
- Staff will avoid using anyone else's personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment.
- Common spaces such as break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms are rearranged to promote social distancing [Describe rearrangement, e.g. furniture rearranged, chairs removed].

## Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by [Church name] staff in accordance with [CDC guidance](#). Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in shared spaces (e.g. break rooms) and high-touch areas (e.g. door handles, railings).

- All custodial staff and their supervisors are provided refresher training on proper cleaning techniques, as well as background information on COVID-19. [Describe the training required and how to access it].
- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to the [Church name], the [Describe who] will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.
- [Describe who] will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons at least once daily, and more frequently if deemed necessary.

## Screening, Exposure, and Illness Policies

[Church name] will notify all staff of screening protocols, self-monitoring guidelines, and policies for staff exposed or exhibiting symptoms. [Describe how you will notify employees e.g. email, church website]. All COVID-19 related updates will be relayed to staff [Describe how you update employees] with updates occurring [Describe frequency].

[Church name] has leave policies that encourage staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies include: [List applicable policies and links that are available for staff].

- [Name policy - emergency leave]
- [Name policy - Pay Provisions During Emergency Closings or Reduced Operations]
- [Name policy - Sick Leave]
- Name policy - Vacation Leave]
- [Name Policy - Short-Term Disability]
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Paid Sick Leave (Federal)

Questions on leave policies should be directed to [Provide point of contact(s) for leave policies and how to make contact].

## Employee Self-Screening for those Working On-Site

Staff members should conduct self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of the virus often include but are not limited to fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Information on COVID-19 signs and symptoms are available at the [CDC website](#).

Staff must report symptoms [Describe how employees are expected to notify the church if they are sick or experiencing symptoms]. Employees exhibiting symptoms should not come into the church.

- Take your temperature in the morning and when you return home from work. Log those results and report any fever to your supervisor.
- Report any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals, respiratory symptoms, sore throat, or dry cough to your supervisor.
- If the employee indicates any of these conditions, the supervisor may require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

If an employee begins to exhibit symptoms at work, [Describe how the employee should report to a supervisor and how the employee will be isolated in the workplace until they can be sent home].

## Confirmed Cases

If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a staff member or in a member of their household, the staff member will be asked to remain at home and considered to be in quarantine for no less than 14 days. A facility assessment will begin to determine what additional public health and cleaning measures should be implemented.

[Church name] will work with [name of health department, e.g. county or state department of health] to inform staff members if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in our facility, and [name of health department] will provide instructions regarding staff self-quarantine measures.

Consistent with compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), staff members health status and health information will be protected.

## Communications and Training

This preparedness and response plan is communicated with [Describe who will receive plan] via [Describe how and when communication will occur]. Training is available to staff and persons using the facility [Describe how training will be delivered].

- Return to Work Training [Describe method, e.g. meeting, videos, handouts]
  - Topics should include but not limited to: Personal Protective Equipment, disinfection measures, social distancing protocol, COVID-19 signs and symptoms



information, return-to-work policies, self-monitoring practices, signage, time-off options and all other COVID-19-related safe workplace changes.

- Enhanced Cleaning [Describe format: video, handout, or instruction guide]
- [Church name] visitor requirements handout
- [Church name] facility use handout
- [Describe other training]

## Facility Use

[Church name] serves as a gathering place for congregation and community members. Gathering purposes in the congregation include: congregational work, support to social justice missions, celebration events, community meeting, and social engagements. Use of the facility will be based on the phases of this plan and align with state guidance and policies. Priority will be given mission related activities.

Any group that would like to use the facility while this plan is operational must request use using the Request for Facility Use form (Appendix A). Each request will be reviewed by an internal committee designated by church leadership.

If approved, each group utilizing the facility will be required:

- Review training provided by [Church name]
- Share [Church name] facility rules with participants
  - Conduct appropriate social distancing
  - Wear masks
  - Wash hands
  - Cover your cough
- Take attendance to include name and contact information

No member of the congregation or community may use the facility until they have received approval from the [Church committee name].

## Resources

Appendix B provides a list of resources to support the church's decisions and activities during the COVID19 pandemic. [Add resources based on state, local, and association guidance].

## [Church name] Phases

The purpose of this phase approach is to provide guidance and direction for activities at the church. The disease progression is imperfectly known and there may be times where [Church name] may need to move back and forth between phases. [Describe phases, criteria for phase, and church activities. Phases (number and names) and content in the table below is provided as an example. Churches should adjust accordingly based on state guidance, association/affiliation guidance, and local circumstances].

External Conditions	Church Activities
<b>Phase 0: Hibernation</b> (Enter dates; e.g. March 12 -24)	
<p><b>External Conditions:</b> Cases presenting in the state with limited community spread and testing is limited.</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> Government and organization leaders are initiating plans for social distancing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess risk to staff and congregation</li> <li>● Meet with church council to determine facility hibernation plan</li> <li>● Cancel or postpone facility onsite activities</li> <li>● Plan for social distancing activities</li> <li>● Meet with staff and initiate plan for hibernation activities</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 1: Stay at Home</b> (Enter dates; e.g. March 25 - May 18)	

<p><b>External Conditions:</b> Government Orders for communities to stay at home. Disease spread is occurring the in the community and hospitalization are increasing. Testing is limited and there are widespread PPE shortages.</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> Government issues to stay at home orders.</p>	<p><b>Church Activities</b></p> <p>Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Worship services move to online delivery.</li> <li>● Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 ft of space between people.</li> <li>● Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptism) are postponed and all participants notified.</li> </ul> <p>Activities on-site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All [Church name] staff will telework</li> <li>● Staff may return to the facility to acquire equipment and record worship segments.</li> <li>● Bible studies and small groups will meet online.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 2: Sunrise (Enter dates; e.g. March 25 - May 18)</b></p>	
<p><b>External Conditions:</b> There are declining case counts and availability of testing is increasing. Contact tracing is in place and PPE is available for social distancing purposes (e.g. cloth masks).</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.</p> <p>Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to the facility.</p>	<p><b>Church Activities</b></p> <p>Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Worship is held online.</li> <li>● Recording in the sanctuary is limited to critical elements of worship, while maintaining at least 6 ft of space between people.</li> <li>● Life celebrations (weddings, funerals, baptisms) should be kept to less than 10 in attendance and be able to maintain social distancing. Approval is required.</li> </ul> <p>Activities on-site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bible studies and small groups continue to meet online.</li> <li>● Office functions are limited to ensure essential operations.</li> <li>● Church councils and leadership teams of less than 10 might consider meeting in person while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, or continue meeting online.</li> <li>● Facility users/renters may be allowed with approval and based on size and mission. Social distancing and public health measures will be enforced.</li> </ul>

**Phase 3: Sunrise Plus (Enter dates; e.g. March 25 - May 18)**

**External Conditions:**

Government leaders continue relaxation of social distancing measures. Cases of COVID19 continue to decrease and testing is available. PPE is widely available.

**Criteria (for phase):**

State provides relaxed guidance for social distancing.

Facilities and core services staff have adequately prepared for return to campus

Church has the ability to gradually expand number of people in the church while maintaining social distancing

**Church Activities**

**Worship**

- Worship is held online and in-person with social distancing measures implemented per local guidance. Multiple services may be considered to spread out participation.
- Entrance and exit into the church will be designed to avoid gathering.
- Communion/Eucharist may be offered in alignment with public health guidance. Consultation with church association/affiliation authorities will occur prior to offering.
- Group singing may be considered based on recommendations by public health authorities.
- No-touch alternatives for passing the peace, collecting offering, and liturgical resources. Consider removing prayer books and Bibles if you will have multiple services. Use bulletins (do not reuse) or screens as alternatives.
- No fellowship/social hour will be scheduled during this phase. People are encouraged to leave the building after the service (no mingling).

**Activities on-site**

- Bible studies and small groups meet in person while maintaining some online options for high risk individuals and those who do not feel comfortable being in public. Approval is required.
- Office functions resume as normal, with attention to cleaning.
- Groups, teams, and committees could meet in person. Approval is required.

High risk individuals (people over 60 and those with underlying conditions), whether staff, volunteers, or program participants, should continue to shelter in place during Phase 3.

Social distancing and public health practices (e.g. wearing masks) will be implemented while at church and in community ministry, as is recommended in public spaces.

**Phase 4: Normal Operations (Enter dates)**

<p><b>External Conditions:</b> There are no or minimal state restrictions. Vaccine available. Widespread testing and identification of new COVID-19 cases, with quarantining is occurring.</p> <p><b>Criteria (for phase):</b> No or minimal state restrictions.</p>	<p><b>Church Activities</b></p> <p>Business as usual.</p>
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## [Church Name] Activities Chart

Content below is provided as an example. Churches should provide content aligned to their pre-determined phases.

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<b>Worship Services</b>	Online	Online	Online	In-Person with Social Distancing	Normal
<b>Students</b>	Online	Online	Online	Online	Normal
<b>Ministry Events</b>	Online	Online	Online	In-person with Social Distancing	Normal
<b>Office Staff</b>	Remote	Remote	Remote / Onsite with Social Distancing	Normal	Normal
<b>Community Groups</b>	Online / Postponed	Online / Postponed	In-Person with permission	In-person with permission	Normal
<b>Life Celebrations</b>	Postponed	Postponed	Postponed	In-Person with permission	Normal

## Appendix A – Request for Facility Use

### Request for [Church name] Use

[Church name] priority continues to be the health and safety of all members of our community. However, we also recognize that our facility supports the missions of our congregation and our community. Consistent with [name state] orders and public health advice, this form will enable church leadership to identify who might be permitted back to use the facility, starting first with groups who support essential church and social justice missions for our congregation and community.

For everyone's safety, the church's intent is to slowly and gradually invite groups back. Decisions for facility use will be based on phases of the [Church name] preparedness and response plan. To facilitate approval for use of our [Church name], please complete the following form.

Name:

Group Size:

Will this gathering be repeated (e.g. weekly)? If yes, describe frequency.

Date for gathering(s):

Provide a brief summary of the gathering and why it must be done on-site or at another location away from your home.

[Church name] will provide guidance for use of the facility. Describe the precautions you will take to ensure your health and safety and the health and safety of those who will participate in the gathering. (methods and means for social distancing, PPE, etc.)

## **Appendix B - Guidance for developing a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan**

### **General**

CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)

### **Businesses**

CDC Resources for businesses and employers – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html)

CDC General business frequently asked questions – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html)

Federal OSHA – [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

### **Handwashing**

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html)

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

### **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html)

### **Social distancing**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

### **Housekeeping**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html)

[www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

### **Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

### **Training**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html)

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf)