

FAQ and General Comments Regarding Church re-openings:

1. Should the preacher wear a mask?
 - It is recommended that preachers wear masks for safety as well as for good modeling for the congregation
2. What about choirs or congregational singing?
 - The Presbyterian Music Association is recommending no choral or congregational music until further notice. Singing is considered a super spreader. It is acceptable to have a soloist offer a musical selection if standing very far away from the congregants
3. How do we begin counting the 14 days of “decline” in order to move to the next phase?
 - First it is important to note that churches may move in and out of phases based on constant changing situations.
 - It is mindful to remember that some people can be ill for months, so be aware that a 14 day countdown of decline in numbers may be quite insufficient. Perhaps a 30 day wait period to begin with is more prudent.
 - Note that people with coughing or and shortness of breath should not be allowed to participate at this time.
4. Who is at high risk?
 - The designated age is for those 65 and older and for those with underlying health issues. The CDC website lists all underlying health issues that it considers that pose a risk.
5. Is it safe to have outside worship gatherings?
 - It is safer to be outside; but that should not change the recommendations of wearing masks, keeping social distancing and the recommended numbers of people. A piece to consider...what if someone needs to go into the building to use the bathroom or there is an emergency? You need a plan
6. What about child and nursery care?
 - Children are unable to social distance and therefore, child and nursery care should not be offered.
7. What about children’s church?
 - Children are unable to social distance and therefore children’s Church and Sunday School should not be offered
8. What about drive in church services where folks are in their cars?
 - As in outside worship gatherings, you need to be prepared for folks needing the use the restroom or if an emergency occurs
 - How will you handle those who wish to get out of their cars and visit?
9. How about communion?
 - It is recommended that in phases 1 and 2, communion be kept to a minimum with a specific plan if you go forward
10. What does the antibody test really mean and does it promote immunity?
 - The medial people do not yet know the answer to this. We do know that some people are sick for a short time if a mild case; but those more severe can have people ill for up to 60

days. The antibody test tells if someone has had Covid 19 in the past. It does not mean you are immune or cannot get re-infected.

11. How do we balance the theological question of hospitality and inclusivity with opening for some but not for all due to high risk?
 - This is a theological question that is worth having in your session.
12. What about opening the church if you are a polling place?
 - The need to be safe but also making it easy for folks to vote requires a plan...cleaning, wiping down, marking where folks should stand in line. Apply the appropriate procedures of cleaning and masking.
13. Weddings and Funerals...will now look very different. If you have them, still need to keep all the rules in place
 - Explore hybrid types of worship
 - Explore live streaming these events
14. Is taking a person's temperature a hipaa violation?
 - No, since you are not looking into a person's medical file. Remember, we are not diagnosing folks with the virus, but are putting into place rules to keep the community safe.
 - Note that even the American With Disabilities Act has provisions for temp checks during a pandemic.
15. Are some masks useless (such as homemade masks)
 - Any barrier is better than no barrier. Homemade masks may not be of the quality of medical surgical masks, but it is better to have one than no mask at all.

General Comments:

1. When in phase 2 (gatherings of 50 people or less) be sure to have a strategy of how you will move people in and out of the building.
2. How will you pastorally deal with folks who don't want to wear a mask, if your 50 person limit has been reached and you have to turn someone away?
3. How will you get information on those entering for worship in case tracking is needed down the line?
4. Who will be in charge of the supplies that may be needed: masks, hand sanitizer. Who will have access to the materials?

****What is your goal in coming back together? What does worship look like together with these moving parts vs. what is being accomplished virtually? Are you already accomplishing what you want? Each context is different...but this is an important question for you and your session to be discussing.**