

Guidelines for Opening Places of Worship during COVID-19

summarized from Kentucky Guidelines
with comparison to Tennessee Guidelines

Healthy at Work

TEAM
KENTUCKY

VERSION 1.1 – Effective May 9, 2020

Guidelines for Places of Worship

Places of worship will be expected to meet the [Healthy at Work Minimum Requirements](#). In addition, **places of worship should follow the guidelines** in order to reopen and remain open:

Social Distancing

- Places of worship should, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to conduct alternative services, including tele-services, radio broadcasts, and drive-in services.
- Places of worship conducting drive-in services should ensure their congregants remain in their vehicles and not socialize through their vehicle windows, except at a distance of more than six (6) feet. Attendees should turn off their vehicles to avoid idling and protect everyone's health.
- Places of worship conducting in-person services should limit attendance to no more than 33% of the building occupancy capacity, including clergy and staff-employees, while maintaining social distance between household units of at least six (6) feet. This means that there must be six (6) feet between individuals on a row and individuals between rows, such that a six-foot radius is maintained around all household units. A place of worship that cannot maintain this space must further reduce its occupancy capacity until it is achieved.
- Places of worship should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that clergy, staff-employees, volunteers and congregants wear coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana)



Kentucky Summary

- In Kentucky, Houses of worship were scheduled to begin reopening May 20, but can now open effective May 9 due to Federal Court Ruling.
- Kentucky State Health Guidelines for reopening churches include:
 - Social Distancing
 - Personal Protective Equipment Requirements
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements
 - Training and Safety Requirements
- <https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work#MinimumRequirements>





The Governor's Office of
**Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives**

Guidance for Gathering Together in Houses of Worship

Tennessee is stronger because of our citizens and communities of faith. Governor Lee is thankful to the houses of worship and faith communities that have played a large part in Tennessee's success to slow the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing and other means of worshiping together without physically gathering.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I of the Tennessee Constitution protect the right of Tennesseans to worship and freely exercise their religion in every aspect of their lives according to the dictates of their own consciences. Additionally, the Tennessee Religious Freedom Restoration Act (T.C.A. § 4-1-407) provides additional protections for religious liberty. Thus, state and local governments must ensure these core constitutional and statutory rights are protected.

This resource is an aggregation of suggested protocols from various faith communities across Tennessee. Not all suggestions will be appropriate for each faith community. These suggestions are included as a courtesy for your convenience. These suggestions are not, and should not be construed as, mandates or requirements by the State of Tennessee, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, or any other entity of federal, state, or local government.

Moving forward, people should continue to exercise caution while COVID-19 remains present in Tennessee. To minister to vulnerable populations while also protecting those populations and continuing our state's progress to contain COVID-19, faith communities are strongly encouraged to continue offering online services and other creative methods of worship and ministry. Faith communities should conduct as many activities as possible remotely and should follow the recommendations in this guidance when deciding to begin gathering in person once again.



Tennessee Summary

- Tennessee is providing “guidance” and emphasizes separation of church and state. Does not have “mandates”
- Religious services considered “essential”
- Houses of worship encouraged to continue “alternative” options
- “Phased” approach to reopening is recommended.



- <https://www.tn.gov/governor/priorities/faithandcommunity.html>

Re-Opening Churches

Kentucky Guidelines With Pastor Daniel's “Not Politically Correct” Interpretation



*Bullet points are intended for understanding and interpretation of the guidelines.
These should not be considered as the official guideline. Also, I am not a lawyer.
Graphics are intended for humor and interest. It is not my intention to offend or stereotype any
individual or group of people.*

Kentucky Churches Must Meet Minimum Requirements for Businesses

- Telework
- Phased return to work
- Enforce social distancing
- Limit face-to-face interaction
- Universal Masks and PPE
- Hand Sanitizer & Hand Washing
- Restrict Common Areas
- Proper Sanitation
- Daily temperature/health checks
- Create Testing Plan
- Make Special Accommodations
- Designate “Healthy at Work” Officer
- Educate & Train Employees
- Contact Notification for positive Tests



Social Distancing Requirements

- Keep online services going!



Places of worship should, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to conduct alternative services, including tele-services, radio broadcasts, and drive-in services.

Social Distancing Requirements

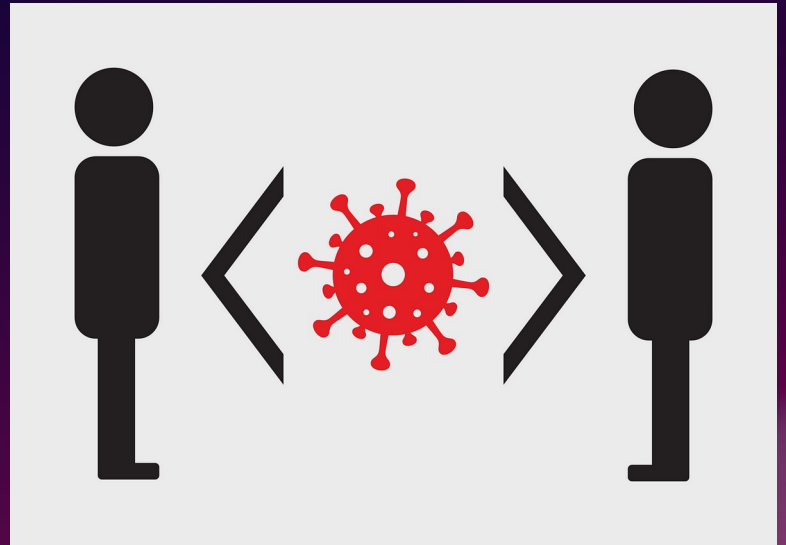
- For drive-in services, stay in your car.



Places of worship conducting drive-in services should ensure their congregants remain in their vehicles and not socialize through their vehicle windows, except at a distance of more than six (6) feet. Attendees should turn off their vehicles to avoid idling and protect everyone's health.

Social Distancing Requirements

- Sit 6-feet apart (from people from other households)
- Don't pack the house!
KY 33% capacity
TN 50% capacity



Places of worship conducting in-person services should limit attendance to no more than 33% of the building occupancy capacity, including clergy and staff-employees, while maintaining social distance between household units of at least six (6) feet. This means that there must be six (6) feet between individuals on a row and individuals between rows, such that a six-foot radius is maintained around all household units. A place of worship that cannot maintain this space must further reduce its occupancy capacity until it is achieved.



Social Distancing Requirements

- Wear A Mask!
- Supply disposable masks for people who don't have one.



Note: Masks are required in public (KY)



Places of worship should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that clergy, staff-employees, volunteers and congregants wear coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana) over their mouths and noses while attending services

Social Distancing Requirements

- No Children's / Youth Classes
- KY - Until June 15
- TN - Until a "later time"



Places of worship should wait to reopen youth services (including, but not limited to, Sunday schools) until childcare services have reopened on June 15, 2020. Once they reopen, youth services should follow the requirements posted for childcare services.

Social Distancing Requirements

- No Choirs
- KY: No Congregational Singing
- TN: Keep 6+ ft apart

What about handling hymnals?



Places of worship should avoid congregational or choir singing during services, as doing creates a higher risk of spreading infectious particles. Houses of worship should consider alternatives to congregational singing, including by playing pre-recorded or live instrumental music (e.g. pianos and guitars - no wind instruments) during services.



Social Distancing Requirements

- Take Temperatures
- Anyone with temperature >100.4 goes home.



Places of worship should consider taking congregants' temperatures and asking about signs of illness before admitting them into the place of worship. If they do take temperatures, they should consider using a non-contact thermometer or thermal imager. If a place of worship must use a standard oral/aural thermometer, consider having the congregant take their own temperature and relay the information to maintain social distancing and sanitize the thermometer after each use.

Social Distancing Requirements

- Go home or stay home if you:
 - Have any symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Have tested positive or been in contact with someone who is sick.
 - Have traveled internationally or to a “hotspot” in the past 2 weeks. (TN)



Places of worship should not allow individuals with elevated temperatures (100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or above) or signs of illness (coughing, shortness of breath, sneezing) to attend in-person services. Houses of worship should direct those having symptoms of COVID-19, as well as people who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms like dry cough, chest tightness, and/or fever, to refrain from participating in any aspect of in-person services. Places of worship should encourage symptomatic persons to stay at home or seek immediate medical care or want to be tested.

Screen Volunteers (Tennessee Guidance)

- Screen all staff and volunteers for COVID-19 symptoms before services with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?



Social Distancing Requirements

- Have greeters point people to masks and bulletins



Places of worship should use greeters to direct congregants to available masks and bulletins. Greeters should be masked, maintain social distancing, and consider wearing gloves.

Social Distancing Requirements

- Post Signs
- Communicate Changes



Places of worship should display markers and signage in the sanctuary/meeting space to guide social distancing.

Places of worship should communicate with the congregation often and with clarity and transparency. Prepare the congregation for worship and for the changes that are occurring in procedures due to the national health crisis

Social Distancing Requirements

- Use Restrooms one-at-a-time (KY only)
- Disinfect restrooms after each use



Places of worship making restrooms available must ensure restrooms are only used by one person at a time and all portions that are regularly touched (e.g., door, sink, and toilet handles) are appropriately disinfected after each use.

Social Distancing Requirements

- Provide Hand Sanitizer, etc



Places of worship conducting in-person services must, to the greatest extent practicable, provide hand sanitizer, handwashing facilities, tissues, and waste baskets in convenient locations.

Social Distancing Requirements

- KY: No eating, no potluck, no communion
- TN: “discourage” group meals



Places of worship should not provide communal food or beverages to clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, or congregants.

Social Distancing Requirements

- Close off gathering spaces
- Create new routes of entry/exit



**AREA
CLOSED**



Places of worship should restrict access to common areas, to the greatest extent practicable, in order to maximize social distancing and reduce congregating. These common areas include, but are not limited to, foyers, lobbies, vending areas, community and multi-purpose rooms, and event spaces.

Social Distancing Requirements

- No Handshakes
- No Hugs



Because of the requirement to socially distance at least six (6) feet apart, places of worship should refrain from the practice of handshaking, handholding, or hugging.

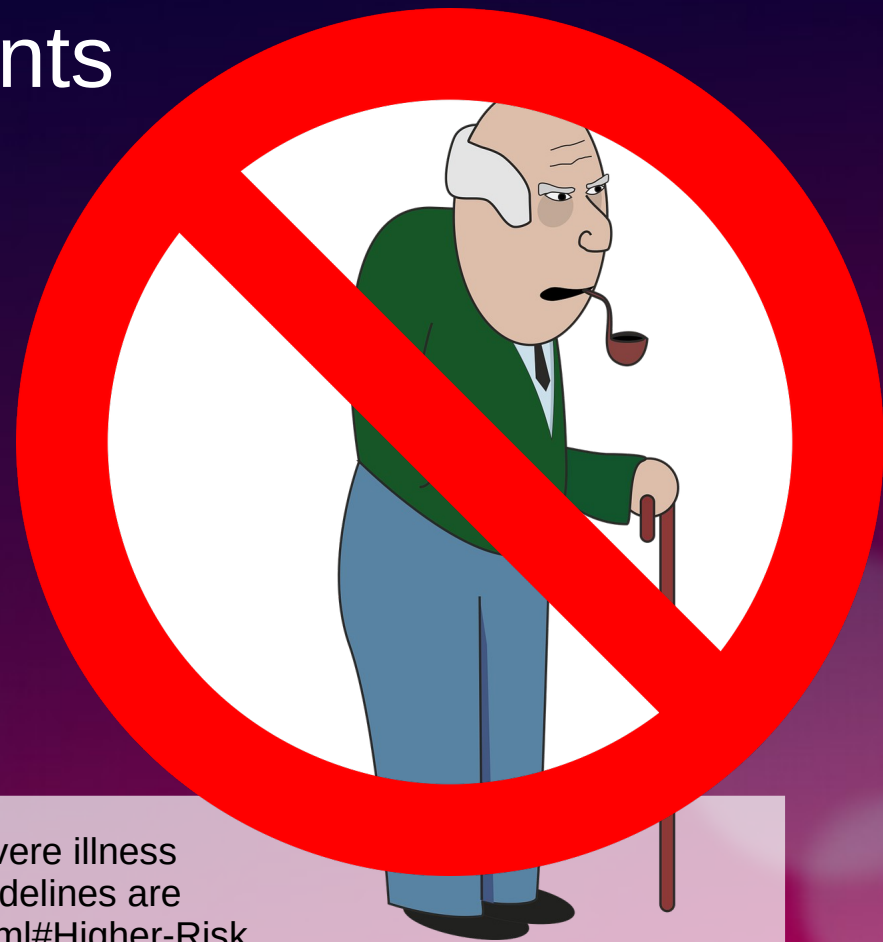
Creative Worship (Tennessee Guidance)

- Have a creative, no-contact greeting instead of handshakes.
- Avoid passing communion, offering plate.
- Avoid sharing / passing microphones.
- Divide into smaller groups for worship, study classes.
- Close coffee stations, discourage group meals.



Social Distancing Requirements

- No attendees who are at high-risk from COVID-19
- Or, provide alternate times for high-risk individuals
- TN: “Phased” approach



Places of worship should encourage those at higher risk for severe illness per CDC guidelines not to attend in-person services. These guidelines are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Higher-Risk>. Instead, places of worship should, to the greatest extent practicable, provide services that are not in-person, including tele-services, drive-in services, and/or radio services for those individuals. If a house of worship is unable to provide alternative services, they should, to the greatest extent practicable, implement hours where service can be safely provided to congregants at higher risk for severe illness.

Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

- Emphasize Mask Wearing

Note: in all public places in Kentucky, it's the law!



Places of worship should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that clergy, staff-employees, volunteers and congregants wear coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana) over their mouths and noses while attending services

Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements

- Properly clean and sanitize facilities.
- Clean surfaces people touch.
- Use bleach & alcohol-based cleaners



Places of worship must ensure facilities are properly cleaned and ventilated. Places of worship must ensure cleaning and sanitation of frequently touched surfaces with appropriate disinfectants. Appropriate disinfectants include EPA registered household disinfectants, diluted household bleach solution, and alcohol solutions containing at least 60% alcohol. Places of worship must establish a cleaning and disinfecting process that follows CDC guidelines when any individual is identified, suspected, or confirmed as COVID-19 positive

Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements

- Don't sweep or blow surfaces – it could spread the virus!



Places of worship, as appropriate, must ensure they do not use cleaning procedures that could re-aerosolize infectious particles. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding practices such as dry sweeping or use of high-pressure streams of air, water, or cleaning chemicals.



Training and Safety Requirements

- Post Signs
- Communicate Changes



Places of worship should ensure appropriate signage is posted throughout their facilities to inform clergy, staff-employees, and congregants about good hygiene and new practices.

Training and Safety Requirements

- Learn not to touch your face.



Places of worship should ensure clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, and congregants are instructed to avoid touching their faces, including their eyes, noses, and mouths, particularly until after they have thoroughly washed their hands upon completing work and/or removing PPE, to the greatest extent practicable.



Training and Safety Requirements

- Communicate Concerns

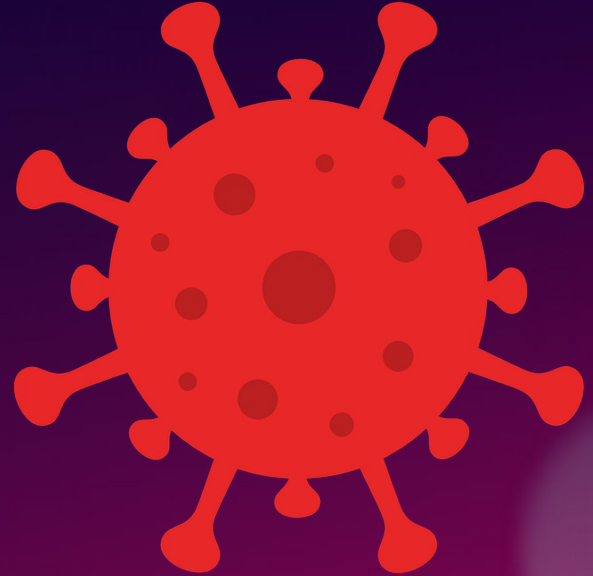


Places of worship should ensure clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, and congregants are informed that they may identify and communicate potential improvements and/or concerns in order to reduce potential risk of exposure.



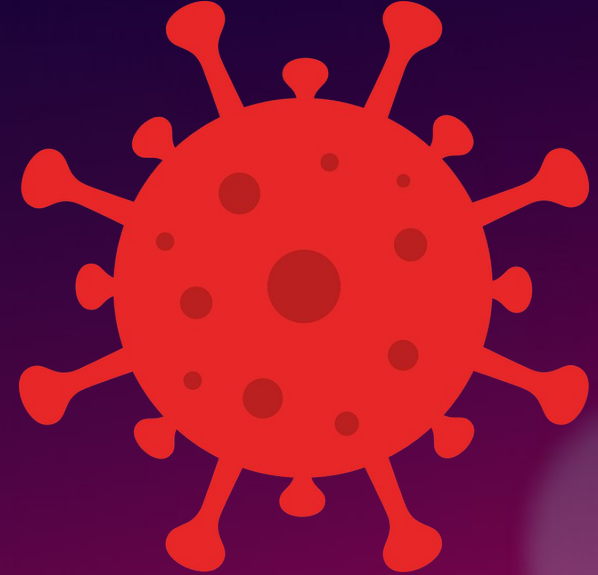
Contact Notification for COVID-19 Positive Tests

- Interpretation based on Kentucky Minimum Requirements for Businesses:
- Churches should consider maintaining a weekly log of attendees with current phone numbers, so that people can be notified in the event of a positive COVID-19 test.



Positive COVID-19 Test (Tennessee Guidance)

- If you learn that a member of your congregation has tested positive for COVID-19, consult CDC guidelines and local health department recommendations to determine whether you should immediately cease in-person gatherings, close for additional cleaning, or otherwise change your protocols.



CDC Guidelines

- Vulnerable Populations
- Cleaning & Disinfecting
- Wearing Face Coverings

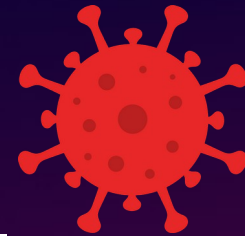


CENTERS FOR DISEASE
CONTROL AND PREVENTION

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>



Refer to official guidelines referenced in introduction.
Do not rely on this summary.

Also consult local (County, City) ordinances as applicable.

Not every guideline will apply to every church in the same way.

Pray. Consult with with local and conference leadership.

Find links and copies of this presentation at:

www.pastordaniel.net/covid19