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8 Things To Consider As You Begin Planning To Reopen Your Church

April 14, 2020 by [Patricia](#)

We are now in the fourth week of the [CDC Shelter In Place Guidelines](#) aimed to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

We have adjusted as recommended.

We have recreated how church is done, and had unprecedented virtual Easter services.

We have learned a lot and managed to embrace the new normal.

The good news is these extreme measures seem to be working and the administration is now planning to slowly reopen our struggling economy.

The battle rages on and the tug of war persists on determining the correct balance of public health safety and allowing an otherwise vibrant economy to die.

I'm thankful that I'm not the one to make those decisions. They are weighty at best.

However, at some point life as we knew it will return – at least to some extent.

So for the church we need to pivot to thinking about what that will look like.

8 Things To Consider As You Plan To Reopen Your Church

1. New Sanitation Guidelines

I don't know about you but I'm amazed at the emphasis on personal hygiene during this pandemic.

I worked in healthcare early in my career and was taught at a young age the proper way to wash your hands and minimize exposure to contagions.

With this pandemic, we have all had a lesson in proper handwashing, household sanitation, and I even watched a video on how to properly unload and sanitize groceries during these uncertain times.

In light of this, churches should be reviewing their [cleaning procedures](#) and preparing for a new normal of sanitation procedures.

For instance, if your custodial team cleans the restrooms only after church services, their cleaning procedures for the common use areas may need to be updated to include all commonly touched surfaces.

Do a walkthrough of your facility and make a list of those commonly touched surfaces (doorknobs, countertops, pews, etc.) and update the [job description](#) for the cleaning crew.

If resources allow, bring in an expert to demonstrate proper cleaning techniques.

Check with the vendor who supplies cleaning products for your church.

They may have someone who can demonstrate and provide the necessary [cleaning checklists](#) for proper sanitation.

Members will want to know that they are returning to a sanitized facility so communicate your new standards for cleaning to reassure them.

2. Stock Up On Supplies

As we have all experienced some necessary supplies are in high demand and difficult to procure.

Make a list of necessary supplies that will be needed and place an order sooner than later.

Consider supplies of toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning products, soap, and hand sanitizer.

Order hand sanitizer pumps for entry areas to offer added protection for members and guests.

3. Dual Service Options

Most members will be excited to finally reconnect to worship together.

However, there may be members in a high risk group who may be apprehensive to congregate.

Be sensitive to this group and consider dual service options – at least for a period of time.

No one knows how long the high risk of infection will last.

And honestly, much of that depends on where you live, but be sensitive to those who may be at a higher risk and don't want to choose between attending a church service and risking their health.

4. Social Distancing

Social distancing is a term that most of us were unfamiliar with just a short time ago. Now its part of the daily narrative and understood by most.

Consider creating [social distancing](#) guidelines specific to your church and encourage members to practice safe distances during a transitional period.

This may include the time during your church service when members have traditionally shaken hands and greeted one another.

5. Welcoming Procedures

Churches love visitors and most go out of their way to make them feel welcomed.

Greeters are those friendly [people who welcome visitors](#). Often that welcome comes with a handshake.

Rethink the greeter job descriptions and consider creative ways to welcome visitors and members with social distancing practices in place.

If your church hands out bulletins or service notes, consider having an electronic version available to eliminate the need for touching paper.

6. Kids Ministry

Kids ministry is an area that always needs sanitation.

Now might be a good time to review sanitation procedures and update them based on the new normal.

For instance, you may want to update worker job descriptions to include frequent wiping down of common surfaces that kids touch.

7. Volunteer Management

The volunteers are the labor engine and need special care.

Plan a time to meet with all active volunteers prior to reopening.

Use this time to reassure them and communicate the new procedures that will be followed.

Help them understand the importance of continuing social distancing practices that may be able to be lifted after a period of time.

Encourage them to help you share the actions the church has taken to [ensure a safe environment](#).

You may find that some volunteers are uncomfortable working for a while.

That's ok. Continue to keep them in the loop and reach out to them to rejoin the force at some point in the future.

8. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

There is no doubt that your [church is communicating](#) now more than ever.

Keep it up and continue to share your plans with members, volunteers and church employees.

Consider setting up a regular communication to provide the newest information about the plans your church has in the next week or months.

Provide a way for members to ask questions and offer help during the transition.

For instance, use your church's Facebook page to communicate and interact with members, staff and volunteers.

Life as we knew it has changed. How long or how significant that change will last is still unknown.

However, now is the time to plan to get back to the business of church so that when that day comes your church is stocked, prepared and trained to welcome visitors and members to the new normal.