

Returning to Our Buildings – the Synod Recommends these Considerations:

First, follow government guidelines:

- [Phase 1-3 Religious and Faith-based Organization COVID-19 Requirements](#) (Updated June 18, 2020)
- Keep in mind, even when your county might permit a more lenient stance, you have both the freedom and the responsibility to consider your context.
- Be sure to follow [CDC Guidelines](#) for best practices.
- With an abundance of caution, the synod continues to encourage non-sacramental worship services and the restriction of group singing.

Second, a thoughtful plan should address the following:

1. How will opening accomplish your primary mission as a congregation?
2. Have you checked with your insurance carrier to see if any of your choices have negative implications for your congregation's liability?
3. Where will you post your congregation's "comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation and recovery plan."
 - Be sure to consider how you will respond to those who are not following your plan
4. How will you continue to offer online services for those who are unable/do not wish to attend in person.
5. Do you have the capacity to clean the building thoroughly according to CDC guidelines between each use?
6. Be mindful of the exposure risks for your pastor, worship leaders, custodian and volunteers.
 - Your pastor and employees do not have to agree to accept this risk.
7. How/where will you offer supplies and a sign in sheet?
 - Where will hand sanitizer and extra masks (for those who arrive without them) be located?
 - Who will be responsible to restock these supplies?
 - Who will monitor the attendance log?
8. How will you maintain physical distancing?
9. How will you collect offering? How will the counters count the offering?
10. If you offer Holy Communion, how will you administer the elements safely?
 - Will you hold non-sacramental worship at first?
 - Can you assure no transmission through distributing elements?
11. How are you working with renters or other outside groups who use the building?
 - How will you keep track of who has entered your building?
12. Meet as needed to evaluate your plan
13. Each congregation or ministry site's rostered minister, along with the congregational leadership, should focus on the congregation's work and use of resources during this pandemic. This is a time to re-think what the congregation is called to do. The question has gone from "How to do online what we used to do in person" to "What is God's Spirit calling us to in our ministry now? How shall we worship, learn, serve, grow, and explore?"