

## Scaling Up Operations

- Establish and maintain communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in your community.
- Provide protections for staff and congregants at [higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19. Offer options for staff at [higher risk for severe illness](#) (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. Offer options for congregants at [higher risk of severe illness](#) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., remote participation in services).
- Consistent with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, put in place policies that protect the privacy and confidentiality of people at [higher risk for severe illness](#) regarding underlying medical conditions.
- Continue to provide congregants with spiritual and emotional care and counseling on a flexible or virtual basis or refer them to other sources for counseling and support if necessary.
- Encourage any organizations that share or use the facilities to also follow these considerations if feasible.
- If your community provides social services in the facility as part of its mission, consult CDC's information for [schools](#) and [businesses and workplaces](#), as relevant, for helpful information.

### Promote [healthy hygiene practices](#)

- Encourage staff and congregants to maintain good hand hygiene, [washing hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for those who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Encourage staff and congregants to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed.
- Whenever soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Consider posting signs on how to [stop the spreadpdf icon](#) of COVID-19 and [promote everyday protective measurespdf icon](#), such as [washing hands](#), covering coughs and sneezes, and [properly wearing a face coveringimage icon](#).

### Cloth face coverings

- Encourage use of [cloth face coverings](#) among staff and congregants. Face coverings are most essential when [social distancing](#) is difficult. Note: [Cloth face coverings](#) should not be placed on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance. [Cloth face coverings](#) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.

### Promote social distancing

- Take steps to limit the size of gatherings in accordance with the guidance and directives of state and local authorities.
- Promote [social distancing](#) at services and other gatherings, ensuring that clergy, staff, choir, volunteers and attendees at the services follow social distancing throughout services, as circumstances and faith traditions allow, to lessen their risk. This may include eliminating lines or queues, if a 6-foot distance between attendees is hard to ensure. Use of cloth face coverings should be encouraged when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Consider holding services and gatherings in a large, well-ventilated area or outdoors, as circumstances and faith traditions allow.
- Consider appropriate mitigation measures, including taking steps to limit the size of gatherings and maintaining [social distancing](#), at other gatherings such as funerals, weddings, religious education classes, youth events, support groups and any other programming, where consistent with the faith tradition. Use of cloth face coverings should be encouraged when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and congregants remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times as needed (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).
- Add additional services to weekly schedules to maintain social distancing at each service if appropriate and feasible. Consider video streaming or drive-in options for services and other gatherings and meetings.
- Consider suspending or at least decreasing use of a choir/musical ensembles and congregant singing, chanting, or reciting during services or other programming, if appropriate within the faith tradition. The act of singing may contribute to transmission of COVID-19, possibly through emission of aerosols.
- Consider having clergy hold virtual visits (by phone or online) instead of in homes or at the hospital except for certain compassionate care situations, such as end of life.

**Take steps to minimize community sharing of worship materials and other items**

- Consistent with the community's faith tradition, consider temporarily limiting the sharing of frequently touched objects that cannot be easily cleaned between persons, such as worship aids, prayer rugs, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts and other bulletins, books, shared cups, or other items received, passed or shared among congregants as part of services. Seek ways to uphold customs central to the practicing of one's faith that limit shared exposure to congregants. Consider photocopying or electronically sharing prayers, songs, and texts via e-mail or other digital technologies.
- Modify the methods used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary collection box or electronic methods of collecting regular financial contributions instead of via shared collection trays or baskets.
- Consider whether physical contact (e.g., shaking hands, hugging, or kissing) can be limited among members of the faith community.
- If food is offered at any event, consider pre-packaged options, and avoid buffet or family-style meals if possible.

Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection following reopening are:

- tables,
- doorknobs,
- light switches,
- countertops,
- handles,
- desks,
- phones,
- keyboards,
- toilets,
- faucets and sinks,
- gas pump handles,
- touch screens, and