

Genesis Church COVID19 Protocols Summary Sheet
December 2020

Principles that must guide our moving forward:

***MISSION.** Being on the mission of Jesus is of the utmost importance. Decisions must be prayerfully made in light of our mission. (And a reminder: the mission is not bound by a building).

***NURTURE NEW FRUIT.** Those coming in who are new to the faith must be nurtured.

***TAKE NEW TERRITORY.** Future plans need to take into account how our mission aligns with our new cultural realities.

***PROTECT THE VULNERABLE.** We will follow the most up-to-date health guidelines in order to protect others. **At this time, and until further notice, strict social distancing and masks are required in any gathering.**

***STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES, including pastors and pastoral staff.** Pastors and staff have been on the “front lines” in this pandemic. Their health and longevity must be taken into consideration when decisions are made.

Remember: we continue to have an opportunity to RELAUNCH in this new territory.

REQUIREMENTS for gathering:

*We understand that people have varying feelings about physically gathering. We extend love and grace to all.

*We will follow local, regional, state & federal guidelines, believing that they are intended for good, understanding that when these guidelines conflict, we negotiate them prayerfully.

*Online opportunities to connect remain vital.

*We ask all those in the “vulnerable” categories to take special care to protect themselves, and wait to return until a later time. (As of today, vulnerable categories include: those with asthma, kidney disease, chronic lung disease, hemoglobin disorders, immunocompromised (including those in cancer treatment), liver disease, those 65 years and older, those with heart conditions, and those who are severely obese).

*We ask that anyone not feeling well choose to stay home.

*All public services must have space to welcome visitors within distancing guidelines. (We do not hold services only for members).

***We require that, out of concern for others, all wear masks (except children under 2), and stay socially distanced (6 feet apart) - see more below**

*Pastors and leaders must read through the state & CDC reopening guidelines (links below) in order to have plans in place with best practices.

Practices in place for buildings:

***Masks are required when entering, exiting, and moving around.** For those up front, wear your mask until ready to speak or lead. (In addition to this being a state requirement, this tangibly demonstrates care for others).

***Masks must be worn during singing** (unless socially distanced at least 12 ft. from others - if a worship leader is at least 12 feet from others, they may remove their mask to lead).

IN ADDITION: for churches in **Yellow, Orange or Red zones**, we ask that all keep masks on for the entire service, with the exception of the speaker or worship leader who is at least 12 feet from others.

***Hand sanitizer** available throughout the building.

*Regular **cleaning and disinfecting** of the building / bathroom according to CDC & state guidelines

***Strict social distancing** to be adhered to (including in bathrooms, lobby, offices), with the exception of family members who live together. Any seating must be separated at least by 6 feet.

***No food or coffee stations.**

***Maintain a continuous log of employees and volunteers** (but not attendees). Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees and volunteers, asking about (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. If there is a positive response to any of the above questions, that person should not enter the building. If someone contracts COVID19, health officials must be notified immediately.

***Post safety plans on site.**

*Offering in a box or basket at the back of the church or online. No plates passed.

*No programs passed out (unless placed on chairs by a gloved and masked individual ahead of time).

*Gathering areas (lobby, fellowship hall) closed or used as hallway space where people cannot gather. (Have a one way traffic flow, with separate entrances and exits).

*No communion elements passed or shared. (Individual and sealed communion cups distributed on a table where they can be picked up is an option, but these must be put on the table by an individual with mask & gloves. See: <https://www.cokesbury.com/081407011585-fellowship-cup-communion-wafer-juice-100-pack> for purchase of these).

***Greeters must remain six feet from all they greet.** No hand shaking, hugs, etc.

***Children's Ministry:**

***Children over 2 must wear masks and stay socially distanced.**

***Volunteers must be screened before serving** (see above)

*As much as possible, coordinate with your local school district to keep children separated and in the rhythm as what they are experiencing at school.

GUIDANCE for Churches in the Orange & Red Zone: (the guidance below arises out of differences in NY guidance and the recent Supreme Court ruling, determining that NY could not put a number limit on religious gatherings).

***Masks required for all throughout the service** (no removing masks once seated)

***Strict social distancing adhered to** (including entering and exiting the building and sanctuary)

***Contact local government** (health dept, etc) to partner with them in your plans. Do they believe it is safe for you to gather with strict adherence to our protocols?

***Consider your meeting space.** Places with low ceilings or poor ventilation are more likely to be places where COVID can spread. If your current Sunday space is in this category, consider either moving the gathering to a space with better ventilation, or going fully online with your services.

****“Read” your community.** If your community would perceive you continuing with Sunday services to be irresponsible and putting people in danger, move your services to online. If your community sees your adherence to protocols as protecting the vulnerable, you may meet. But also recognize...

***Check in with key volunteers.** Your decision may be determined by the number of key leaders and volunteers who either decide to stay home or are required to quarantine.

... after considering all of this, prayerfully make a call on whether to physically gather or meet only online.

Resources:

New York Reopening Guidelines for Communities <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/ReligiousandFuneralServicesSummaryGuidance.pdf>

CDC guidelines for faith communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html>

FMC Guidelines from the Board of Bishops: <https://fmcusa.org/covid19>