

Walking Together Returning to Worship in Our Buildings

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT
VIDEO CONFERENCE
SERIES FOR PROFESSIONAL
CHURCH WORKERS AND
CONGREGATIONAL
LEADERS

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REVIEW AND EVALUATE

Psalm 121 The Lord is My Helper

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?*



COVID-19

- A contagious virus spread from person to person primarily through respiratory droplets.
- No available vaccine.
- No definitive medical countermeasures.
- Limited testing available.
- Social distancing limits the disease spread.
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports 1,412,121 cases in the US and 85,990 deaths *as of 5/15/2020*.



CURRENT ON-LINE WORSHIP PRACTICES

- Celebrate on-line worship successes.
- Review current live-stream and recorded worship opportunities.
- Assess on-line worship attendance.
- Continue to provide on-line worship for high risk individuals.
- Identify equipment and personnel requirements needed to continue/enhance on-line worship.



PREPARATION

Psalm 121 The Lord is My Helper

*² My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

PLANNING

- Appoint a building re-entry team.
 - Include members from worship, music, education, member care, community outreach, and communication ministries.
 - Include a member from each tenant congregation worshipping in the building.
- Consider a phased approach to welcoming worshippers back to the building (may be dictated by state executive orders.)
- Develop tools to assist re-entry (resources on SED Website.)

PLANNING

- Follow CDC guidance “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Follow state and federal policies and guidelines on reopening.
- Communicate plans across all communication channels using consistent language including community communication.
- Acknowledge that on-line worship is an excellent option.

REHEARSING THE PLAN

- Choose a date to launch on-site worship.
- Host a “soft” reopening one week prior to launch.
 - Include pastor(s), worship leaders, re-entry team, and others.
 - Invite a sufficient number of HEALTHY, masked (recommended) participants to run-through safe worship practices.
 - Identify and place signs to mark traffic patterns in the building, worship seating, and other practices specific to your space.
 - Note and record deficiencies for correction.

REHEARSING THE PLAN

- Receive feedback from participants.
- Evaluate lessons learned from the “soft” reopening and incorporate these into worship guidance, practice, communication and signage.
- Develop plan to train volunteers.

ON-SITE WORSHIP

Psalm 121 The Lord is My Helper

*He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.*

*⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

GUIDANCE AND SAFE PRACTICES

- Ensure compliance with CURRENT state or municipality guidance.
- Question worshippers prior to entering the building about fever, feeling ill, exposure to person(s) with COVID-19.
- Close common areas (fellowship halls, church offices, classrooms) and removing furnishings that encourage congregating.
- Promote good hygiene by placing hand sanitizer at all entrances and in the seating areas.



GUIDANCE AND SAFE PRACTICES

- Refrain from singing and speaking in unison.
- Refrain from handshakes, hugs, contact closer than 6 feet, and passing offering plates.
- Remove high touch items from seating areas including hymnals, Bibles, friendship folders, and guest cards.
- Follow CDC Guidance to clean between services.



CONTINUING CARE

Psalm 121 The Lord is My Helper

⁵ The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.





AFTER WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

- If an attender is diagnosed with COVID-19 after worshipping in the building:
 - Follow procedures to inform public health officials.
 - Develop guidance on informing tenant congregations and non-church groups, if any, using the space.
- Require tenant congregations and non-church groups to inform church of any COVID-19 cases among their attendees.



DISCUSSION

Psalm 121 The Lord is My Helper

⁷The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

⁸the Lord will watch over your coming and
going
both now and forevermore.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What measures have you put in place to show care and safety for your members?
- How are you training your volunteers?
- How do we honor people who are afraid to return to the building?