

# 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

*<sup>2</sup> 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.*

*<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> The Lord watches over you—  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
<sup>6</sup> 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

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

<sup>8</sup>the 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?