



MINISTERING IN A PANDEMIC CULTURE

RETURNING TO IN-HOUSE GATHERINGS

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L Dennis Page, Administrative Bishop

Dewayne Moree, Youth & Discipleship Director

ENC PANDEMIC TASK FORCE:

Scott Neal, Matthew Cornett, Brian Wible, Anthony Braswell,

Danny Johnson, Clint Claypoole, Will Earp

Edition 1: (May 2020)





GREETINGS FROM BISHOP DENNIS PAGE



L DENNIS PAGE
ADMINISTRATIVE BISHOP
BISHOP@ENCCOG.ORG



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**OUR MAIN GOAL IS TO
PROVIDE POSITIVE
LEADERSHIP, TO PUT OUR
BEST FOOT FORWARD AND
TO USE GODLY WISDOM TO
OPERATE AND FUNCTION
APPROPRIATELY.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused all of us to adapt to many changes as it relates to our normal routine and schedule. This season that we are experiencing has been challenging to say the least. However, on a positive note, it has created space in our life to evaluate our priorities, to determine what things in life are most important, to have the freedom to orchestrate change, to venture down untrodden paths and to get the church outside the building.

Our main goal is to provide positive leadership, to put our best foot forward and to use Godly wisdom to operate and function appropriately. I am so proud of the leadership of Eastern North Carolina and how you have worked so hard to provide strong spiritual leadership and a message of Hope. It is our responsibility to lead by example in our churches and communities. The level of creativity to minister under social restriction and mandates has propelled the Gospel message outside the four walls of the church building in an unprecedented way to reach untold thousands.

THE GOOD NEWS! During times of uncertainty, we can rely on God to calm our anxiety, open up a new path and to give us hope that we can survive whatever the world throws at us.

“And your life will be brighter than the noonday; its darkness will be like the morning. And you will feel secure, because there is hope; you will look around and take your rest in security.” Job 11:17-19

WHAT NOW? We realize that life and ministry after the COVID-19 pandemic will never look exactly the same. **How do we relaunch, recover or return to our in-house gatherings?** I really like what Andy Stanley stated, “We are not returning back, we are starting over!” For many churches and individuals, we are starting over! The way we do church will never be the same. However, as we return to gathering in our church buildings, may God help us never to lose the determination to continue to use every resource and means to spread the love and hope of Jesus Christ. *The Apostle Paul said,*

*“... I have become all things to all people, **that by all means I might save some.** I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” 1 Corinthians 9: 22-23 (ESV)*

“... I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can.” (verse 22 CEV)

HOW! I hope that this resource handbook will assist you in how to “Minister in a Post Pandemic Culture” with emphasis on “Returning to In-House Gatherings”. We are focusing on seven areas of importance as you lead during this season.

**CARE | COMMUNICATION | COMMUNITY | CHANGE
CURRENCY | CLEANING | CHECK LIST**

In addition to this handbook, we want to provide instructional videos and consultants to discuss how to navigate through the lifting of COVID-19 mandates and restrictions.

LDP



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CREDITS: This handbook is a combination of many great suggestions and ideas from ENC pastors on how to “Minister in a Pandemic Culture while Returning to In-House Gatherings”. A special thanks to Anthony Braswell, Clint Claypoole, Matt Cornett, Danny Johnson, Scott Neil, Brian Wible and Will Earp. I certainly appreciate Dewayne Moree, Eleni Kelley and Joann Medlin for formatting and editing this document. Also, a special “THANKS” to the leaders in Delmarva, Louisiana and the International Offices for sharing several resources.

All supplemental videos can be found at: <https://bit.ly/ministering-in-a-pandemic-culture>



1. CARE OF THE PASTOR



SCOTT NEAL
FOREST PARK CHURCH
SCOTT@FPLIVE.ORG



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**“YOU ARE CALLED,
GIFTED, ANOINTED, AND
THERE IS TOO MUCH
INVESTED IN YOU, AND
YOU HAVE INVESTED TOO
MUCH TO QUIT.”**

1. CARE OF THE PASTOR

Pastor, I want to help you. How? By standing beside you, listening, encouraging, answering questions, and giving ideas. Why? Because I believe in you. You are called and gifted. You work, serve, love, and pour yourself out week after week. You are essential to God’s Kingdom, and I’m proud of you.

But, right now, life is difficult. We are attempting to pastor and lead our people within a unique and uncertain season. Our people are worried. They are confused and searching for a leader to trust.

What our people need more than anything is a calm and confident voice in the middle of the confusion and chaos. You can be that voice. You can stand and point the way. You can reassure them, calm them, and provide clarity.

But you must take care of yourself.

Pastor, here is what I know about you because I know it about me. You are tired often. You get frustrated. You grow weary from the pressures of ministry. The complaining, the budget, the preaching, the counseling, the distractions, the temptations, and a myriad of other pressures overwhelm you. And when you add the uncertainty and anxieties of this virus to the normal demands of ministry, you feel, at times, as if you are drowning. You want to say with the Apostle Paul, “we were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life” (2 Corinthians 1:8).

I get it. And every pastor gets it.

But you don’t have to break. You don’t have to be overcome. You don’t have to lose in the end.

You are called, gifted, anointed, and there is too much invested in you, and you have invested too much to quit.

That’s why I want to help.

“YOU ARE ONE OF THOUSANDS OF PASTORS DOING THEIR BEST WEEK AFTER WEEK TO CONNECT, LOVE, AND SERVE THEIR PEOPLE. WE ARE SUCCEEDING. WE ARE ON THE SAME TEAM. YOU ARE NOT BY YOURSELF.”

HERE ARE THREE THOUGHTS TO KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY, CONFIDENT, AND ABLE TO LEAD EFFECTIVELY DURING THIS SEASON:

1. REMIND YOURSELF YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

I know many of you feel alone, but you are not. You are one of thousands of pastors doing their best week after week to connect, love, and serve their people. We are succeeding. We are on the same team. You are not by yourself. If you feel alone, contact someone. Contact a fellow pastor, contact your district overseer, contact me. I'm happy to speak to you and encourage you.

2. STAY CONNECTED WITH OTHER PASTORS AND LEADERS.

Few activities encourage me more than spending time with other pastors, laughing, talking, and sharing ideas. I've discovered pastors are willing to connect. They need to be asked. Many pastors are lonely. So, they enjoy making new friends. I know it is challenging to get together in person. But you can pick up the phone, participate in a Zoom call, email, or text someone today. If you are not connected, it is because you choose not to connect.

3. STRENGTHEN YOURSELF.

Your people need you to be informed, positive, and filled with encouragement. And in order to do, you must remain strong. How? Of course, spend time in prayer and Scripture study. But I suggest you also read books about leading during the crisis and listen to podcasts filling your mind with fresh ideas. I suggest setting a goal to read two books and listen to eight podcasts per month. Yes, that's one book every other week and two podcasts each week. But I promise you, if you do, you will be filled with information, encouragement, and ideas. And you'll be stronger than you imagined possible.

There are many challenges in front of us. It is easy to feel overwhelmed, but you are not alone. There are many opportunities to connect, and lots of resources by which you can find strength.

You can do it, Pastor. I have confidence in you.



2. COMMUNICATION

2. COMMUNICATION



MATTHEW CORNETT
PRINCETON CHURCH
PASTOR@PRINCETON.CHURCH



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<https://bit.ly/ihgcommunication>

**“THERE HAS NEVER
BEEN A TIME WHERE
COMMUNICATION IS
MORE IMPORTANT.”**

There has never been a time where communication is more important. Our communities are experiencing a tension between health and the desire for community. We must keep in mind that the context of all our communities will be different. For instance, in urban communities people are much more likely to be cautious as opposed to rural communities where people will have a stronger desire to jump back into “in person” gatherings. This is one of the reasons that strong communication is so important. As pastors/shepherds we cannot assume that our people/sheep understand what our plan is or what is going through our minds. Our expectations are not really expectations at all when they have not been clearly communicated.

The only prescription for uncertainty is clear and decisive communication, or “touches.” A touch can be defined as any form of communication via text, email, phone, or even mail. As pastors, it is our responsibility to make sure that our vision for the churches reentry to “in person” services is made clear to as many as we can reach. Habakkuk 2:2 says,

“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.”

Therefore, we must communicate until we are sick of it, and then we are just beginning to communicate enough with our congregation.

For some, communication is easy, and for others, it is a challenge. No matter, it is worth the effort to reach out to as many and through as many methods as possible.



“WE MUST COMMUNICATE UNTIL WE ARE SICK OF IT, AND THEN WE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO COMMUNICATE ENOUGH WITH OUR CONGREGATION. .”

HERE ARE A FEW KEYS TO GREAT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CONGREGATION (TOOLS USED ARE IN PARENTHESIS):

1. Communicate clearly and often (TextInChurch - Text, MailChimp - Email, PhoneTree Online - Voice, Social Media).
2. Be reminded that some demographics will not use technology, so mailed cards and letters are still highly effective.
3. Information is priority: service times, volunteer opportunities, phases of reopening.
4. Use communication as an opportunity to testify, encourage, and remind the congregation of the church's good work.
5. Create opportunities to hear from your membership (SurveyMonkey - Email Surveys, Planning Center Forms - Free Customer Management Software).
6. Overcommunicate health precautions in ALL ministry areas.
7. Make sure that all members have a minimum of one “touch” a week.



3. COMMUNITY



BRIAN WIBLE
KENLY COG
PROPERTY@ENCCOG.ORG



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**“IF OUR ONLY COMMUNITY
CONNECTION IS A
GATHERING IN A BUILDING
ON SUNDAY MORNING, WE
HAVE MISSED THE EXAMPLE
OF THE EARLY CHURCH.”**

3. COMMUNITY

Community is the heartbeat of what the church is. We are created to, “bear one another’s burdens.” We do this by connecting with each other in many ways. One of the main platforms we use is gathering in the place designated as the House of the Lord. In doing so, we fulfill the call in Hebrews 10:25,

“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”

We are also so much more than people who are limited to gathering in one location, in one structured setting; we are the flexible, functioning Body of Christ. We read in Acts 2:46,

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.”

The church went from temple to houses as needed. The flexibility of the early church is being demonstrated very well during this time of pandemic. Each place of worship has adjusted and continued to be the church in whatever manor is feasible for their conditions. The church has never stopped being a place of community, we have just adjusted and continue the cause of Jesus with the passion of the early church. As we move forward towards a date of in-house gatherings, we need to continually implement community connection now and adjust along with each phase. If our only community connection is a gathering in a building on Sunday morning, we have missed the example of the early church. As we navigate this “new normal,” let us practice community with the passion and flexibility of the early church.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Addressing ministry needs will be more complex and unique when people leave their homes. The church must be prepared for the immediate logistical and personal realities. People will not be the same when they return. New opportunities to minister will exist with new hurts that have been created during this time of crisis.

1. How could you create a hybrid between on-campus and on-line platforms for those unable or hesitant to return to campus in the near future or for the broader community wanting to remain connected from afar (e.g., Sunday School, Small Groups, Prayer Meeting, Ministry Teams/Committees, Needs request, etc.)?
2. Will your church continue to offer childcare during services in the same way it did before? If so, what additional precautions will you take in this area (e.g., temperature checks, snack time modification/elimination, extra volunteers, pre-register children to limit how many are in a room at a time, etc.)?

3. What preparations do you need to begin making now to be ready for adjustments to your Summer programming (e.g., VBS – on campus, virtual or at Home)?
4. How will you address the personal and family struggles that may have surfaced in the last couple of months (e.g., marriage or financial strain, emotional or physical abuse, job loss)?
5. What plan do you have in place in the event volunteers step down (e.g., elderly cease working with children, elderly no longer work as a greeter, etc.)?
6. What is the maximum capacity your sanctuary can hold and still maintain safety for your congregants (i.e. Social Distancing)?
7. What is the best option to continue to reach the larger portion of your congregation?

Here are some considerations for continuing to build community with your congregation.

VIDEO SERVICE

There are streaming services, both free and paid, that can enhance this experience. You can do live or pre-recorded services. You can go live or pre-record directly on Facebook or YouTube. Consider optimizing your online schedule to offer more opportunities for virtual gathering than just your physical gatherings.

VIDEO MEETINGS

Smaller groups can meet in video platforms. This is an opportunity that will allow everyone to communicate and interact with one another without the fear of personal contact.

DRIVE-IN-SERVICE

This is a great option to consider if your facilities allow for it. Have vehicles safely spaced in the parking area. You can use a sound system to project sound. Another option is a FM transmitter, that allows everyone to turn to a chosen station and listen from the vehicle radio.

PREPARATION TO MEET AGAIN IN PERSON

- Use this time to plan and prepare for future in-house worship experiences. When you return to in-house gatherings, you must continue to follow government guidelines and safety precautions.
- Be prepared to adapt the physical gathering schedule to accommodate any restrictions placed by state or governmental officials.
- Consider multiple services in preparation for “high risk” attendees or simply social distancing?
- Special consideration should be given concerning children’s ministries. When it comes to Children’s Ministry follow the local school systems guidance. If they’re not having school, you shouldn’t offer that ministry right now. If they social distance to x number in a class, you should try to do that as well... even if you have to do multiple meeting times for the kids. Kids ministries is a big challenge because most aren’t prone to social distancing to begin with.



4. CHANGE



ANTHONY BRASWELL
NORTHPARK CHURCH
PASTORANTHONY@
DISCOVERNORTHPARK.COM

4. CHANGE

The world has changed. Your church has changed. The people who call your church home, yep, they have changed too.

As the world slowly re-opens, I have a challenge for you. Fight the urge to go back to the way it was. Let's be honest; it's naive to think that everything is going to be the same as it was before this world-wide pandemic began. While that's frustrating and a little scary, it's not a bad thing. You aren't reopening to normal. There is a new normal.

As you get ready to lead your church into the future, the following are a few things to keep in mind.

1. KEEP LEARNING. KEEP PIVOTING. KEEP INNOVATING.

If this season has taught us anything, it's that we must be willing to embrace change. We've all heard the phrase, "To reach people that no one else is reaching, we must be willing to do what nobody else is doing." I would add, "If you want to reach the people of your community, you must be willing to do what YOU'VE not been doing."

I applaud you because that's exactly what you've done. You learned some new things and developed new tools. **You made a huge difference because you were willing to make a huge pivot.**

Why stop now?

Don't just go back to what is safe. Don't waste the progress you've made. Don't let a sudden lack of creativity limit your mission.

Keep learning.
Keep pivoting.
Keep innovating.

2. "DIGITAL CHURCH" IS HERE TO STAY.

Digital, Virtual, or Online Church has been such a valuable asset to our ministries in this season. Many pastors have reported that they are reaching MORE people with the Gospel than they have ever had the opportunity to reach. **Your influence is greater than you can imagine.**

Why would you NOT continue to share the Gospel in that way?

You've figured out how to use the technology. That was the hard part. Now, let's focus on how to be even more excellent in sharing the message.



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**"IF YOU WANT TO REACH
THE PEOPLE OF YOUR
COMMUNITY, YOU MUST
BE WILLING TO DO WHAT
YOU'VE NOT BEEN DOING."**

- Share your services online.
- Host online Bible studies.
- Create online life groups.
- Use the technology as a tool of discipleship and assimilation.
- Continue online giving.
- Create an online campus.
- Raise up an online campus pastor.

The great thing is ministry isn't relegated to Sundays or Wednesday evenings. With the use of technology, you aren't limited to time or space. You could create ministry opportunities every day of the week.

People are engaging online more than ever, and that's the main reason that you should as well. Don't get me wrong. Nothing takes the place of face-to-face interactions. Nothing beats the intimacy of spirit-filled corporate worship. I'm not saying to stop those things. I'm simply challenging you to "throw the net on the other side of the boat."

3. BE LASER FOCUSED.

We can't do everything, but there are a few systems we can't afford to ignore. Honestly, making sure these systems were working well helped us to not just "survive" in this season, but "thrive" in it.

- **Dynamic Worship Experience (Online or In-Person):** Whether you do in-person, drive-in, or online experiences, do them well.
- **Life Groups:** Life change happens in the context of meaningful relationships. If people aren't able to meet face-to-face in groups, work hard to create online communities or groups using Zoom or some other form of technology.
- **Outreach:** Don't allow your church to turn "inward." Stay focused on pastoring your community.
- **Strong Financial Systems:** Living "hand to mouth" or "week to week" makes for a stressful way to do ministry in any season, but detrimental in times of crisis. Work hard to build financial systems and create an opportunity or obstacles fund that will sustain you when times are tough. Also, online giving options are NOT an option. Give everyone an opportunity to be a great steward of what God has placed in their hands and to invest in the mission to build life-long followers of Jesus. Online giving options will allow them to continue to do that whether you have service or not.

4. NOW IS THE TIME TO CRUSH "SACRED COWS."

If there has ever been anything you have wanted to change in ministry, now is the time. People are more open to change right now because so many of the systems and structures they are accustomed to have drastically changed.

Before we rush back to the "norm;" we should probably ask, "is the norm worth rushing back to?" There are a lot of things in our church structure that I miss and can't wait to do again. There are also some areas we have decided we are better without. It's time to take a good look at where we invest our time, talents, and treasure.

If there is a better way to share the Gospel, I'm willing to try it. Will everything work for your culture, church family, or city? Of course not. But, let's not be afraid to try. The box we have tried to stay in for so long has been obliterated. You've already embraced more change in two months than you ever dreamed you would have to embrace.

You've got this, and we are with you every step of the way.



5. CURRENCY



DANNY JOHNSON
 GOLDSBORO WORSHIP CENTER
 PASTORDANNY@
 GOLDSBOROWORSHIPCENTER.COM



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**“ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO
 GIVE TOWARDS VISION,
 AND NOT JUST KEEPING
 THE CHURCH AFLOAT.”**

5. CURRENCY

The impact of this pandemic has affected numerous areas within the church with a major impact on giving. In Genesis Chapters 37-50: God gave Joseph the insight to navigate a nation through a national crisis and caused it to prosper in all areas. God can do the same for you: in, through and after this crisis!

The following list of ideas is specifically directed to financial leaders across the church to help with sustaining the church and its ministry (and perhaps growing it in areas) as we live through these Coronavirus days.

CAST VISION

Habakkuk 2:3 This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming.

In order to maintain healthy currency flow, don't just *take up* the offering...*CAST VISION* as much as possible. Encourage people to give towards vision, and not just keeping the church afloat.

1. Everyone loves stories that pull the heart strings. Share whats taking place *from* the church during this crisis.
 - Share the outreach opportunities in the community your church is involved in that is making a difference. (i.e. feeding hospital workers, food boxes for those in need, masks and face protection shields, etc.)
 - Casting Vision will cause people outside the church to give to churches who are meeting needs in the community.
2. Have constituents share personal testimonies of how God has provided because of their continued support to the church during COVID-19.
 - Their stories are contagious and can cause your giving to increase during and coming out of the pandemic.
 - One Pastor said...*“You're not giving TO the Church - you're giving THROUGH the Church...”*

USE VARIOUS METHODS

1 Corinthians 12:5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord.

It's so easy to get cornered into methods we miss opportunities. During this crisis, Pastors and leaders have had to think outside the box when it pertains to giving. We are quickly becoming a cashless society and the church can easily become crippled by locking into a certain giving method.

Pastors/Churches have had to be open to giving resources made available throughout this pandemic. As the doors of the church open, continue to use these resources to maintain and even increase the level of giving.

It is vital that every pastor develop different avenues of giving: mail-in, online, text-to-give, Church App, giving stations and giving lock boxes etc.

- 1. Online/mobile giving:** Statistics show a 20-30% increase because of mobile giving. There are a number of online giving resources available we encourage you to use and allow to become a staple for the future of your giving. A full resource page is located at <http://eccog.org/online-church-resources#onlinegiving>
- 2. Giving once doors are opened back up:** Safety, health, along with trust within the people is of utmost importance. The social distancing guidelines and its stigma once lifted will be around after the initial virus has departed. *Creating a trusted environment within the people returning - along with new guest visiting is imperative.*
 - To begin with, you should *PROHIBIT* the traditional method of ushers going from row to row receiving offering. This is due to many hands touching offering plates while passed around and can possibly create an untrustworthy environment.
 - *Alternatives:* Have giving stations located around the room so small groups/rows of congregants can drop their offering in the plate.
 - Use locked boxes mounted on the wall or in convenient locations they can drop their offering in and feel secure. Ordering link: www.displays2go.com
 - During each service, take time to recognize the various ways people can give and share the stories of lives changed.
- 3. Continue to use Social Media:** Use these platforms to promote worship services along with events the church is involved in and share the ways people can give there (have it listed at the bottom of your posts).

ADJUST BUDGETING

1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Budgeting is not a curse word... it is wise in financial planning and monitoring spending trends. Budget planning is a critical element for ministry consideration as you plan towards reopening your church campus. It is important, as leaders, to keep your finger on the pulse of budgeting; therefore, you will have to adjust spending to accommodate new resources that are adding to expenses.

1. Watch for areas in expenses you can cut back on. There may be areas/jobs that you pay to outsource, (i.e. grass maintenance, cleaning etc). Very possibly, you can find servants within the church willing to take that on for a season.
2. Cleaning and contact mitigation efforts will be an ongoing expense. Keep this in mind as cleaning supplies will increase, so budget planning is necessary to up-keep these new expenses.
3. Create fund increments that will release the ability for a task force to spend concerning COVID-19 response; rather than constantly pulling the church together to vote to release funds.
4. Develop an emergency fund (3-6 months of income/expenses). This will take time and discipline, but it's possible!



6. CLEANING



 **CLINT CLAYPOOLE**
CARY COG
CLINT.CLAYPOOLE@CARY.CHURCH



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<https://bit.ly/ihgcleaning1>

**“CRISES DOES NOT HAVE
TO RESULT IN CONFUSION,
BUT A GREATER UNITY AS
WE SERVE EACH OTHER
EFFECTIVELY.”**



PROPER WAYS TO CLEAN
<https://bit.ly/ihgcleaning2>

6. CLEANING

As with any natural disaster of the past, at some point we find ourselves slowly returning to some sense of “normalcy”. At this point, the need for isolation and social distancing are giving way to reconnecting with our communities and attending our church services. Now with restrictions lifting, there is a significant question every church will need to answer: How can we ensure health and safety within ministry after COVID-19?

As church leaders, we’ve been provided an opportunity to lead with a spirit of excellence and value the cleanliness and safety of our church services. *Excellence is not just what we do; it’s who we are.* We serve a God who deserves all of us and the best of us. His name is described as excellent in Scripture:

*“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth”
(Ps. 8:1).*

Whether janitorial or ministerial, excellence should be our benchmark in a post COVID-19 ministry.

Ministry excellence will require a team effort, involving both staff and volunteers. As we respond to this crisis, we’re reminded in Scripture that God gives us unique gifts to assist the entire body in reopening our ministries. Crises does not have to result in confusion, but a greater unity as we serve each other effectively. Our prayer is that God will guide your staff and volunteers into the right roles for this moment. The following steps are practical guidelines to ensure safety with cleaning and ongoing mitigation. Remember, a spirit of excellence will promote a sense of confidence and care to our congregations.

Reopening ministry to a “routine” mindset will more than likely be an impediment within the framework of our new challenges. This new normal will require every church leader to foster an environment of creative thinking and flexible planning. Remember, people will need to reorient to a post COVID-19 environment, and this recovery will take some time. Managing ministry after a crisis is just as important as how we manage during a crisis. The greatest test of leadership is on the other side of the challenge as we assess our losses and move towards reentry.



“AS CHURCH LEADERS, WE’VE BEEN PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD WITH A SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AND VALUE THE CLEANLINESS AND SAFETY OF OUR CHURCH SERVICES.”

DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED.

High touch surfaces include: Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, touch screens, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

DEVELOP A CLEANING TEAM AND SCHEDULE.

Practice routine cleaning: More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.

DISINFECT RISK AREAS FROM GERMS.

Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect: Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.

Cleaning Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

CONTACT - ONGOING MITIGATION GUIDANCE

Touchless Services

- No opening doors (Doors are open)
- No Food or Drinks
- No Communion
- No offering buckets (Drop off / online)
- No bulletins (Online)
- No handshaking
- No Kids ministry (Family service)
- 2 seats removed /spacing / multiple services (Social distancing)
- Staff & Volunteers wear mask (Optional)
- Restrooms (Determined by facility size)

Contact Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>



7. CHECKLIST

7. CHECK LIST

✓	TASK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
ENTRANCES		
	Doorknobs/Handles Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Handrails Cleaned/Disinfected	
DOOR GREETERS		
	Thermometers	
	Gloves	
	Masks	
	Sanitation Wipes	
COFFEE STATIONS		
	Disinfect Counter	
	Fill Hand Sanitizer Station	
	Individual Sugar and Creamer Packets	
RESTROOMS		
	Fill Hand Sanitizer Station	
	Fill Soap Dispenser	
	Disinfect Counters	
	Clean/Disinfect Toilets	
	Fill Toilet Paper Dispenser	
	Fill Paper Towel Dispenser	
SANCTUARY/CLASSROOMS		
	Carpet Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Pews/Chairs Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Offering Receptacles Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Song Books Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Microphones Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Musical Instruments Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Fill Hand Sanitizer Stations	
NURSERY		
	Carpet Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Cribs Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Changing Table Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Cribs Cleaned/Disinfected	
	Fill Hand Sanitizer Station	
	Toys Removed from Room	
	Hard Surfaces Cleaned/Disinfected	



SANITIZE

As you read all the resources, the first requirement mentioned is to sanitize your church and to be able to provide verification of that sanitization. Some resources say that you should have your church professionally cleaned, if possible. People returning to church will be vitally concerned about sanitization. One resource states that you should even make sure your church smells clean!



TEAM

I am seeing recommendations that there should be a dedicated cleaning team which will be ongoing, and which will see keeping the church cleaned and sanitized as a ministry, almost like a safety or security team.



ASSESS

Be sure to correctly assess your state/county/local guidelines and requirements, and to comply with them. As mentioned earlier, this is going to vary from state to state and possibly from locale to locale. We are seeing recommendations regarding the use of masks and gloves, social distancing, testing, and contact tracing. These requirements should be considered, as well as possibly allowing attendance at services in shifts and not all at once.



REASSESS

As we all know, it is going to be necessary to reassess our methods of worship and contact among our constituency. Many churches already have navigated into online worship and live-streaming of services, and many of these new methods will continue to be utilized. There are some good guidelines regarding this in the above materials.



THINK

Think outside the old box. It will be necessary to continually think about new ways to incorporate church when people cannot come to the church. Online giving will have to continue and new methods of keeping church community will have to continue. There will be some people who simply will not be comfortable coming to church on site; therefore, you will need to be able to accommodate their needs.



RECOMMENDED GOVERNMENTAL PHASES

PHASE 1:

- Stay At Home Order remains in place, people can leave home for commercial activity
- Those retailers and services will need to implement social distancing, cleaning and other protocols
- Gatherings limited to no more than 10 people
- Parks can open subject to gathering limits
- Face coverings recommended in public
- Restrictions remain in place for nursing homes and other congregate living settings
- Encourage continued teleworking

PHASE 2:

AT LEAST 2-3 WEEKS AFTER PHASE 1

- Life Stay At Home Order with strong encouragement for vulnerable populations to continue staying at home
- Allow limited opening of restaurants, bars and other businesses that can follow strict safety protocols (reduced capacity)
- Allow gathering at houses of worship and entertainment venues at reduced capacity
- Increase in number people allowed at gatherings
- Open public playgrounds
- Continue rigorous restrictions on nursing homes and congregate living settings

PHASE 3:

AT LEAST 4-6 WEEKS AFTER PHASE 2

- Lessen restrictions for vulnerable populations with encouragement to continue practicing physical distancing
- Allow increased capacity at restaurants, bars, other businesses, houses of worship and entertainment venues
- Further increase the number of people allowed at gatherings
- Continue rigorous restrictions on nursing homes and congregate care settings



WEAR

A Cloth Face Covering

IF YOU LEAVE HOME, KNOW YOUR W'S!



WAIT

6 feet apart. Avoid Close Contact



WASH

Your Hands Often or Use Sanitizer



RECOMMENDED CHURCH STAGES

STAGE 1: RETURN

INDIVIDUAL SAFETY

Request Strict, Safe Distancing

- Masks (Optional)
- Sanitizer Stations
- No Handshakes
- No Childcare
- No Coffee Time
- Offering is Drop Off Only
- No Communion
- Spaced Sanctuary Seating
- Sick Must Stay Home
- Intense Cleaning of High-Touch Areas

CHURCH PROGRAMMING

- Follow Governmental Capacity Percentage
 - Other Church Activities Cancelled
 - Continue Social Media Connections
 - Continue Live Stream for Vulnerable
-

STAGE 2: TRANSITION

INDIVIDUAL SAFETY

Reduce to Moderate, Safe Distancing

- Masks (Optional)
- Sanitizer Stations
- Handshakes Optional
- Resume Childcare
- Coffee Time
- Offering Can Resume As Normal
- Pre-Packaged Communion
- Increase Sanctuary Seating
- Sick Must Stay Home
- Intense Cleaning of High-Touch Areas

CHURCH PROGRAMMING

- Follow Governmental Capacity Percentage
 - Small Group Gatherings Can Resume
 - Continue Social Media Connections
 - Continue Live Stream for “Cautious”
-

STAGE 3: NEW NORMAL

INDIVIDUAL SAFETY

Remove Safe Distancing

- No Masks
- Sanitizer Stations
- Handshakes
- Continue Childcare
- Coffee Time
- Offering As Normal
- Regular Communion
- Normal Sanctuary Seating
- Sick Must Stay Home
- Resume Regular Cleaning Practices

CHURCH PROGRAMMING

- Normal Seating Capacity
- Large Gatherings Can Resume
- Encourage Face-to-Face Connections
- Church Available for Large Gatherings
- Continue Live Stream for “Outreach”

MINISTERING IN A PANDEMIC CULTURE

RETURNING TO IN-HOUSE GATHERINGS

A COVID-19 handbook designed to help you through various points of consideration as your church implements new methods, polices and procedures while returning to in-house gatherings.

L Dennis Page, Administrative Bishop
Dewayne Moree, Youth & Discipleship Director



7107 NC HWY 581 N. | KENLY, NC | ENCCOG.ORG | 919.284.3039