



Religious Gatherings COVID-19 Quick Sheet

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

May 21, 2021

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) offers the following general considerations to help communities of faith discern how best to practice their beliefs while keeping their staff and congregations safe. Many Michiganders embrace worship as an essential part of life. For many faith traditions, gathering in person for worship is at the heart of what it means to be a community of faith. But as Michiganders are now aware, gatherings present a risk for increasing spread of COVID-19 during this pandemic. MDHHS offers these suggestions for faith communities to consider while preparing for increased in-person attendance and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Safety actions

Continue to take these steps to reduce your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19:

- Correctly and consistently wear a mask that completely covers your nose and mouth.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others who do not live with you.
- Avoid crowds during religious events.
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol).
- Get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Get tested if you have signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or if you think you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Even if you and others (including children) do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms, you can still spread COVID-19 to family, friends, and community if you are not fully vaccinated.

If you are not fully vaccinated, do not be around others if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, if you are sick, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19.

For those who are fully vaccinated.

Vaccines give you the freedom and peace of mind to be able to do more things. Individuals who are fully vaccinated:

- Do not need to wear a mask at outdoor gatherings.
- Do not need to wear a mask while attending indoor gatherings.
- Do not need to get tested or quarantine after being exposed to someone who is showing symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Promote social distancing.

- Take steps to limit the size of indoor gatherings.
- Promote social distancing at services and other gatherings, ensuring that clergy, staff, choir, volunteers and attendees at the services follow social distancing, as circumstances and faith traditions allow, to lessen their risk.
- The safest option is to hold services in an outdoor area. If this is not possible, consider holding services in a large, well ventilated area, 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.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).

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, such as worship aids, prayer rugs, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts, and other bulletins, books, or other items passed or shared among congregants, and encouraging congregants to bring their own such items, if possible, or photocopying or projecting prayers, songs and texts using electronic means.
- Modify the methods used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary collection box or electronic methods of collection instead of shared collection trays or baskets.
- Limit physical contact 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.

Nursery/Childcare

- If a nursery or childcare will be provided during services and events, refer to the MDHHS information on [preventing the spread of COVID-19 in childcare settings](#) and adapt as needed for your setting.
- If holding summer day camps, refer to Michigan Licensing And Regulatory Affairs information on [youth and summer camps](#) and adapt as needed.

Staffing and training

- Train all clergy and staff in the above safety actions. Consider conducting the training virtually or, if in-person, ensure that social distancing is maintained.

For more information

- State of Michigan Coronavirus Website: Michigan.gov/Coronavirus
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html