

COVID-19 Gathering Plan

A. Approach to Gathering:

1. **Fellowship & Worship:** As followers of Jesus, we prioritize the regular gathering of believers for fellowship, worship, and the Word. We are eager to gather with as many people as possible, as safely as possible.
2. **Unity & Humility:** There are a wide-range of strongly held convictions about the coronavirus pandemic and how individuals, businesses, governments, and churches should respond. As followers of Jesus, we are called to walk in humility, grace, love, and unity with one another. We seek to outdo one another in showing honor. Consider this wise article: [Church, Don't Let Coronavirus Divide You](#).
3. **Health & Safety:** As Christians, we want to do all that we reasonably can to value and protect the vulnerable in our community. We honor and reflect Jesus when we sacrifice our own needs for the needs of others. We pray for peace and safety in God's world.
4. **Respecting Guidelines:** The elders and deacons are staying informed and mindful of all the guidelines and recommendations from the State of Pennsylvania and the CDC. We are thankful for the exemption granted by the State of Pennsylvania for religious gatherings specified on this [FAQ](#). In light of all this, we pray God would grant wisdom to our leaders, and we set policies that work for our community.
5. **Community Witness:** We are called to be a light to the world around us, so we want to live and gather in such a way that our attitudes and actions display faith, grace, humility, courage, and love to the world.

B. Worship Gatherings at the Y

1. **Congregation Size:** Beginning in September 2020, we will gather in our new worship center at the YMCA with 250 chairs. The elders and deacons will continue to monitor the government recommendations, the community response, and our church needs and adjust the number of people at these gatherings using godly wisdom.
2. **Livestreaming:** Those at home will be able to join the worship service through the online livestream for the foreseeable future. For those at home, please know you are a valuable part of our church family and we miss you!
3. **Children's Ministry:** As always, children are welcome in our main worship service. We will offer modified children's classes as necessary and able. For specific details, refer to the Children's Ministry Gathering Plan.

C. Facility Sanitation

1. **YMCA Cleaning:** The Y will continue to take care of overall facility cleaning and professional custodial services.
2. **LHC Cleaning:** Each week a Hospitality Volunteer will clean all high touch areas.
3. **Infection Response:** Following the [CDC Guidance for Faith-Based Organizations](#), if there is a confirmed COVID case at any Church Gathering, we will:
 - a. Notify local health officials and the YMCA and follow their recommendations about facility closures or limited access.

- b. Ensure that the facility is thoroughly disinfected in partnership with the YMCA.
- c. Communicate with the congregation and offer alternative forms of gathering as needed.

D. Physical Distancing & Personal Sanitation Expectations

1. **Exposure & Discretion:** Consider your personal and family health and use discretion in attending any Church Gathering. Those at high-risk due to age or preexisting conditions should exercise caution. If anyone in your household has a fever, any coronavirus symptoms, or close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case ([as defined by the CDC](#)), you should not attend any Church Gathering for two weeks.
2. **Physical Distance:** Avoid physical contact and maintain a respectful distance from other worshipers. Rows of chairs will be spaced out to allow for wider aisles. Sit in family groups spaced out from others worshipers (with 4 chairs between groups). Parents are responsible to keep their children abiding by these recommendations.
3. **Facility Usage:** All doors will be propped open whenever possible. Do not go in any rooms or touch surfaces or equipment that are not necessary.
4. **Hand Washing & Sanitation:** Wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently. There are multiple hand-sanitizing stations throughout the Y.
5. **Food & Drink:** We will not be providing coffee or food. Water fountains will not be accessible. We will provide bottled water.
6. **Fellowship Time:** Before and after the service, be mindful to maintain a respectful distance as you fellowship in the Worship Center, common areas, or outside.
7. **Face Coverings:** At this time, everyone attending any indoor church gathering (except small children and those who are not able because of health or conscience) are asked to wear a face covering while inside the YMCA. We intend to continue monitoring local conditions and recommendations and update our guidelines as appropriate. Parents use your best judgment in applying these guidelines to your children.

E. Other Ministry Gatherings

1. **Ministry Gatherings:** Opportunities for fellowship and ministry will be available through Life Groups, Youth Group, Men's Ministry, and Women's Ministry. These meetings will be outside when feasible or inside when discretion allows. Small group gathering can be held in homes at the homeowner's discretion.
2. **Outdoor Services:** We will host opportunities for outdoor worship, fellowship, and communion at the YMCA pavilion or local parks as the weather allows.
3. **Exposure & Discretion:** Consider your personal and family health and use discretion in attending any Church Gathering. Those at high-risk due to age or preexisting conditions should exercise caution. If anyone in your household has a fever, any coronavirus symptoms, or close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case ([as defined by the CDC](#)), you should not attend any Church Gathering for two weeks.