

Guidance for Faith Based Organizations

April 23, 2020

What adaptations have worked well for Gaston County churches during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Streaming services – Facebook live, Youtube, and Zoom
- Communicating more via email
- Calling members (responsibility divided among church leaders)
- Posting recorded videos on Youtube
- Phone-in Sunday school and bible study
- Zoom meetings
- Parking lot or Drive-in services

What else can faith leaders do now to encourage the community to stay safe?

- **Share personal stories/ pictures** of high risk (see below) friends or family who you are protecting by following the recommended precautions
- **Share these recommendations** with congregation – during services, on social media, over email or phone, etc.
 - Stay home as much as possible
 - Keep 6 feet of distance from people you don't live with
 - Wear a mask when you can't keep 6 feet of distance
 - Wash hands before putting mask on and after taking it off
 - Do not touch the mask while wearing it
 - Wash cloth masks after each use
 - Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds
 - Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
 - Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
 - Limit trips to the grocery store (one person making one trip per week for the household is recommended)
 - If possible, combine trips and shop for other households, friends or neighbors – especially if others are considered high risk
 - If you feel sick, stay away from other people and call your doctor
 - Here is a flier you can share: [click here](#)
- Encourage members to safely check on each other and help care for those who are high risk – pickup groceries and medications, deliver meals, etc.



Begin planning for transition to a “new normal”:

Faith leaders should begin thinking about how they will operate once some restrictions are lifted. COVID-19 will likely be a threat in our community until an effective vaccine or treatment is available. How will you continue to ensure the safety of your congregation? Official guidance will be released, but here are some things to think about:

- Continuing to stream services for those who are high risk or otherwise prefer to engage from home
- Limiting the number of people in attendance for services or events
- Holding additional services with fewer people in attendance at each
- Encouraging those who attend to wear masks and keep 6 feet apart
- Rearranging furniture or blocking off seats to ensure distance between people in attendance
- “No touch” policies for greeters/passing of the peace/meet & greet
- Having a stationary collection plate/basket rather than passing items through those in attendance
- Having single servings for communion (prepped by people wearing gloves and masks)
- Making hand sanitizer available
- Continue encouraging anyone feeling sick to stay home
- Cleaning Guidance can be found [HERE](#)

Who is Considered High Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19?

- People 65 years of age and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions including: lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, or with a weakened immune system.
- People with severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)

Reliable sources of information and social media posts to share:

Gaston County Coronavirus Information Line: 704-862-5303

Gaston County Coronavirus webpage: www.gastongov.com/coronavirus

NCDHHS website: www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus

[Gaston County Facebook](#)

[NC DHHS Facebook](#)

[NCDHHS Twitter](#)

[North Carolina Alliance for Health Facebook](#)

