



Southeastern Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

“GUIDELINES FOR A PHASED TRANSITION TO OUR NEW NORMAL IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19”

Introduction: Our Phased Strategy to Safely Gather Together Again

The following recommendations for gathering back physically as a congregation are based on the interpretations of our Southeastern Synod' COVID-19 Taskforce from current information and guidance from health agencies, and federal and state plans. It offers congregations relevant guidance and a strategy for supporting a safe phased reopening for the physical life of a congregation.

Given that this medical crisis is continually changing and the rate of infection varies from community to community we cannot predict what the future may be like or what the additional challenges might be.

New Normal

The recommendations for congregations to implement a phased strategy to safely gather together again is not a return to pre-pandemic normal. Until there is a cure or vaccine to this virus we are attempting to help guide your congregation in determining safe ways to continue doing ministry.

These recommendations rely on actions we must all consistently take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. They include physically distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, handwashing, cleaning surfaces and staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine. We will only be able to safely maintain our phased strategy efforts if all of us commit to maintaining these recommendations.

Again these are recommendations to phase back in your local physical buildings but you will want to continue to listen to your local authorities and your congregational members to determine what your next steps will be.

Phasing back into physically meeting for ministries will require your congregation to: 1) continue being flexible to each phase to reduce the likelihood of relapse to a previous phase, and 2) avoid threats that may prevent movement into the next phase. This is a framework; each phase may be adjusted as the understanding of local transmission changes over time. A mid-phase adjustment example might be that after an asymptomatic carrier attended an event and later tested positive, a congregation might adjust

back to less programming or physical gatherings until it is determined whether others have been affected. Another example might be that if within your local community hospital capacity and the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) becomes stretched and the local authorities recommend no in-person gatherings, your congregation might need to phase back in-person activities. Remember, flexibility will be key to the health and wellbeing of the community at large.

These recommendations are focused on the ways individuals and congregations can work to protect the safety of our communities while advancing through a phased reopening. Continuing to understand your local concerns is critical to our ministries; thus the role of a COVID-19 Team for your congregation introduced in a later section will play a vital role in advising and directing your individual congregation through the remainder of this crisis.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has also offered guidance in their document “Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns: Returning to Public Worship Being Church Together during COVID-19 Pandemic” please click [HERE](#) for their guidance.

In addition to the guidance from the ELCA and in this document, the COVID-19 Taskforce has an Extended Guideline document [HERE](#) that has more scientific data and things to consider.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THIS MANUAL

This document is to serve as a manual to guide individual congregations in developing their own response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Southeastern Synod Bishop's Office and Leadership recommends that each congregation form their own COVID-19 Taskforce, including a member to serve as their congregation's Disaster Coordinator with whom the Synodical COVID-19 Taskforce will communicate additional resources and provide guidance throughout this crisis.

Within this manual you will find guidance for individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and we are recommending that all individuals develop 5 CORE ACTIONS that will allow congregations to begin to physically meet for ministries. These 5 CORE ACTIONS are:

- Physically Distancing
- Wearing Cloth Face Coverings
- Hand Washing or Hand Sanitizer
- Cleaning Surfaces
- Stay Home if Sick or advised to stay home by a medical or public health professional.

We also are recommending that congregation determine within their own local geographical region if certain "Benchmarks" have been met to determine when to move to the next phase of physically gathering or if a geographical region has surpassed safe levels and congregations would need to phase back physical gatherings. In all decisions, please follow the legal recommendations for your community.

Within this document there are suggestion regarding how to prepare for physically gathering again, including a Facility Checklist at the end of the document to assist congregations in preparing their physical spaces to be occupied.

Once your congregation has educated your congregational members about their roles in the prevention of this disease and determined the ways congregations will prepare the building prior to gathering and develop appropriate measures to maintain cleaning standards, your local congregation will determine when it will ready to begin phasing back to gathering physically for ministries.

While this document is comprehensive because there are so many unknowns for how this disease will effect communities we will be continuing updating information as it comes available and that will be communicated through the Southeastern Synod's [website](#) and through the local congregation's Disaster Coordinator to your congregation's COVID-19 Taskforce.

We encourage you to consider how you are caring for your neighbor through developing plans to gather physically as a congregation, to be flexible and move forward with patience and grace as you make decisions regarding physically gathering as a community. Because this disease effects so many in vulnerable populations we encourage all congregations to continue to offer ministries online for those who do not feel comfortable gathering in person.

We have provided a variety of web resources that are embedded throughout the document and are listed at the end of the document, as resources come available we will add them.

The priority for all of us is the health and well-being of our communities and we pray for those who are caring for those effected by this disease, those working to develop a treatment plan or cure and all those who have been sick from it.

Finally, we know that while preparing our members/visitors and the facilities dealing with the effects of this pandemic is stressful and affects us both physically but emotionally. We have also included a list of Mental Health Resources (pg. 29) to assist congregations to care for each other emotionally.

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Understanding COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. Current information about the symptoms can be found on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#). It is thought to mainly spread through droplets expelled when someone breathes, talks, sings, coughs, sneezes, etc. In most instances of transmission close contact (sometimes called “face-to-face interaction”) is believed to be responsible for spreading the virus when an uninfected individual breathes in the droplets from an infected individual. Close contact is when a person is within 6 feet of another person for a prolong period of time (thought to be around 10 minutes).

Although it’s not thought to be the primary mode of transmission, COVID-19 can also spread when a person touches a surface where droplets have settled and then touches their nose, mouth or eyes. These two main types of transmission are the basis for the [Core Actions](#) individuals can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- **Physical Distancing**
Physical distancing (also called social distancing) means keeping space between yourself and other people who do not live with you. To practice physical distancing:
 - Stay at least 6 feet from people who are not part of your household – “Farther is better.”
 - Do not gather socially in groups above the size indicated by the Phase.
 - Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings as indicated by the Phase.
- **Cloth Face Coverings**
When outside the home, the wearing of cloth face-coverings (masks) by all individuals unable to consistently maintain 6 feet of distance is strongly encouraged and at time required. Cloth face covering are intended to trap droplets leaving the wearer’s mouth and nose. This reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19 if someone is asymptomatic or is pre-symptomatic, which means they don’t look or feel sick but can still pass COVID-19 on to others. Wearing a cloth face covering protects your neighbor. When your neighbor wears a cloth face covering they are protecting you. Cloth face coverings also help to remind you not to touch your face with unwashed hands. Cloth face coverings are not considered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The CDC has [guidance on how to make, wear and care for a cloth face covering](#). When not wearing a cloth face covering (at home or when eating, for example), it is important to cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and not your hand.
- **Proper Handwashing**
Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds helps to remove the virus from your hands if you come in contact with the virus. If soap and water is not available and your hands are not visibly soiled, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used.

Remember to wash your hands after you have been in a public place or touched an item or surface that may have been touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pump, shopping carts or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc. Wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because this is one way COVID-19 enters our bodies. The CDC website has more information on [when and how to wash your hands](#).

- **Cleaning Surfaces**
Regularly disinfect surfaces with soap and water or [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) (including bleach and cleaners containing at least 70% alcohol) helps to prevent transmission from droplets that may have settled on surfaces or have transferred to commonly used surfaces through touch, such as door handles and light switches.
- **Stay Home if Sick or You Are Instructed to Isolate/Quarantine by Medical or Public Health Professional**
If you are sick or instructed to stay home, stay home. The strategies listed above rely on people staying home when they know they feel sick or have been told to isolate/quarantine. If you feel sick and are concerned, contact your doctor's office to determine if you need to be seen. If possible, ask others to deliver needed supplies instead of going to the store. If you live with others, follow [CDC guidance for caring for someone who is sick at home](#).

BENCHMARKS: marker indicating when it might be appropriate to move to the next phase of physically gathering, including mid-phase adjustments and whenever a congregation might need to revert to a previous phase.

The following benchmarks need to be achieved prior to physically gathering and for moving to the next phase. A significant amount of time will need to be spent in each phase regardless of whether the benchmarks are met at an earlier time point.

To determine if your community is ready to be physically gathering, consult your local authorities to determine the rate of infection and whether the risk of infection has decreased. Through the joint effort of citizens in "flattening the curve," the number of active COVID 19 cases has stayed far below the capacity of the health care system in parts of our synod. This has provided the region with time to increase supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), hospital surge capacity, testing capacity and the ability to surge contact tracing should it be needed and appropriate. As communities implement physically gathering strategies the rate of infection and active cases will increase. The focus of when to move from one phase to the next will need to be assessed based off the local ability to manage an increase in cases while preventing the unobstructed growth of transmission.

Benchmarks

Decisions about how to move through the phases will not be made based on any one number or figure. Decisions must be made by looking at multiple data points and trends, along with developments in science and technology. All of these factors must be considered when determining when and how to proceed through the process. Each congregation will need to consult local authorities to determine the readiness of the community.

A sustained reduction or stability in new cases for **14 days** is an indicator for movement toward the next phase. Although most cases occur within 5-7 days of exposure, almost all are evident by 14 days.

Conversely, a statistically significant increase in new cases will require a full assessment of the current situation and other benchmarks. It may mean we need to make mid-phase adjustments (such as re-

imposing stricter physical distancing guidelines) or even mean we need to revert to an earlier phase of opening. For example, if a congregational member tests positive and has been in physical proximity with a worshipping community, those who have been exposed will need to self-quarantine to eliminate transmission of the virus and in-person worship may need to be stopped and all those who have been exposed may need to be tested. Immediately following the knowledge of a new confirmed case, the congregational COVID-19 Taskforce will need to enact a response and communicate it to members of the congregation.

COVID-19 Taskforce

Each organization is asked to form their own congregational COVID-19 Taskforce. The individual congregational COVID-19 Taskforce will need to implement strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This Taskforce needs to be familiar with the life of the congregation and the working of the ministries of the congregation to determine what safety measures need to be implemented. The work of the COVID-19 Taskforce should be in partnership with the pastor and Church Council or governing body of your congregation. The key qualities of the Taskforce members should include people who will take action to implement the recommended measures, stay aware of changes to recommendations through official communication channels within your local/state/federal levels, as well as synod recommendations. The Taskforce should have the authority to enforce the recommended measures on an ongoing basis throughout the returning to physical gathering phases.

COVID-19 Safety Signage

Everyone doing their part is central to any plan developed by a congregation. An important way to protect members, as well as others from the community who may be using the congregation's physical building, is by displaying information on the ways we can all protect each other's safety. In order to help educate the community, congregations should print and post safety signs reminding people of physically distancing, wearing a mask, washing hands, wiping down surfaces and staying home if sick. Signage should be placed at all entrances informing how and where to enter.

COVID-19 Communication & Support

The role of the Southeastern Synod Covid-19 Taskforce will remain focused on guiding a synod-wide response to this virus and advising the Bishop and Synod Council. The SES COVID-19 Taskforce will continue to develop educational materials on how congregation can respond to the crisis, as well as supplying resources for worship, faith formation and pastoral care. It will not be possible for the COVID-19 Taskforce, the Bishop, or the Bishop's staff to "sign off" on ways individual congregations implement the recommended guidelines. The Synod Staff will continue to provide guidance and answering questions from individual congregations, Rostered Ministers and members about how to implement the recommendations.

Congregations are encouraged to find a "Disaster Relief Coordinator" who can work with individual COVID-19 Taskforces, church councils and members in responding to this crisis but who would be trained by the Southeastern Synod Disaster Relief Team on how to respond not to just this crisis but if there was a natural disaster in your community. You can learn more about that role [here](#).

General Planning & Preparedness Guidance for Congregations

Congregations are encouraged to establish controls to protect congregational members, employees and the community.

COVID-19 mitigation measures can look like:

- Basic Infection Prevention Measures.
- Engineering controls – creating physical barriers between people, such as taping off seating to keep the required safe distance between people when on the church campus.
- Administrative controls- establishing guidelines to reduce contact between individuals (example no physical interaction during sharing the peace)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – having people wear nonmedical cloth face coverings

(NOTE: The following guidance is adapted from [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 from OSHA](#))

Basic Infection Prevention Measures

- Physically Distancing – whenever possible having people worshipping from home via technology allows people, especially those within the vulnerable population, to be protected.
- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing those present in the church building with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Ensure congregants and employees stay home if they are sick.
- Encourage all people on the campus wear cloth face coverings and practice respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Provide tissues and trash receptacles for those in attendance.
- Church councils should explore whether they can establish policies and practices to increase the physical distance among congregational members and visitors and others.
- Discourage people from using other people’s equipment, including phones, desks, offices. When not possible, hand sanitizer should be used both prior to use of communal items and immediately after. Routinely sanitize shared surfaces and equipment throughout the day and between users. Including limiting use of nurseries and toys, church busy bags and pew pens/pencils
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of congregational life.

Engineering Controls

Engineering controls involve isolating people from hazards. In public spaces where they are appropriate, these types of controls reduce exposure to hazards without relying on individual behavior and can be the most cost-effective solution to implement. Engineering controls for COVID-19 include:

- Installing high-efficiency air filters.

- Increasing ventilation rates in buildings. Ventilation rates differ from air circulation rates. Air circulation without enhanced ventilation can potentially increase the travel distance of COVID-19 droplets beyond 6 feet.

Administrative Controls

Administrative controls require action by the members and staff of the control. Typically, administrative controls are changes in policies or procedures to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard. Examples of administrative controls for COVID-19 include:

- Require sick members or staff to stay at home.
- Minimizing contact among members or visitors by replacing face-to-face meeting with virtual communications.
- Determining if additional ministry opportunities are needed to maintain physical distancing.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings

Training members and visitors who need to use protective clothing (including the use of a cloth face covering, cloth face coverings are not considered PPE) and equipment how to put it on, use/wear it, and take it off correctly, including in the context of their current and potential duties. Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all people. The CDC has [guidance on how to make, wear and care for a cloth face covering](#). If someone arrives for an event at the Church and does not have a cloth face covering, congregations need to be prepared to provide one or ask that person to not attend.

Introducing the Phases

This section includes information for each of the three phases. Beginning to phase back to physical gatherings is determined when the appropriate “Benchmarks” are met. Phase One includes more detailed information regarding gathering physically, while the other two phases serve as a broad framework that will be enhanced through collaborative process with the community. By focusing on Phase One, the framework contains room for Phase Two and Phase Three to address emerging challenges and opportunities that may present themselves on the road ahead. The Congregational Disaster Relief Coordinator for the congregation will be the main person through whom the Synod’s COVID-19 Taskforce will communicate updates regarding moving into Phase Two and Phase Three.

Mid-phase adjustments, such as reducing congregational involvement or requiring the wearing of cloth face coverings in certain settings instead of strongly recommending them, may be issued in order to protect the congregational health and well-being.

The phased approach to gathering physically is **not** a return to pre-pandemic normal. The phased plan presents a pathway for gathering physically that relies on the core actions we must all consistently take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. They include physical distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, handwashing, cleaning surfaces, and staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine. We will only be able to safely maintain our phased approach to gathering physically if all of us commit to maintaining these core actions.

These are general guidelines that apply to all three phases. These general guidelines provide information that expands on these core actions, outlining specific ways that individuals, and organizations can protect health and safety as you reopening occurs.

Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases

This section provides general guidelines for all phases. A good practice would be for individuals to assume they are infectious and that others are infectious as well, regardless of whether they exhibit symptoms.

Individuals (Including Members, Employees, Community members)

Using Physical Distancing Whenever Possible

- In public, stay at least 6 feet away from others not from your household whenever possible. Remember “farther is safer.”

Continue to Practice Good Hygiene

- It is strongly recommended (and at times required per phase guidelines) that you wear a cloth face covering (mask) when unable to consistently maintain 6 feet of physical distancing while in public.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol), especially after touching used items or surfaces.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or inside of your elbow. Dispose of tissues after a single use.
- Regularly disinfect frequently used items and surfaces using soap and water or [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) (including bleach and cleaners containing at least 70% alcohol).

People Who Feel Sick or Have Been Told to Isolate/Quarantine Should Stay Home

- Stay home if you feel sick or have been told to isolate/quarantine due to potential exposure.
- If you are concerned about your health, contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.

Show Courtesy to Others

- When in in public, stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.
- Follow directions on safety signage displayed in congregations.
- Be a part of keeping things clean: Use hand sanitizer stations, cloth face coverings, and other means to protect yourself and others.

Higher-risk Individuals

While this document provides guidelines to allow our congregations to begin physically gathering, individuals must consider their personal risk and determine whether to increase their interactions in the community as phases progress. Throughout all phases, higher-risk individuals are encouraged to follow

the guidance specifically for them. In Phase One and Phase Two, this means staying at home as much as possible. In Phase Three, this means resuming public interaction with physical distancing.

Higher-risk individuals, as determined by the [CDC](#), include those over the age of 65, and those with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised.

Implement strategies addressing the safety of two broad categories of people:

- Congregational members, visitors, community groups, etc.
- Employees, coworkers, contract employees, etc.

Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with federal, state and local regulations and guidance, and be informed by best practices for congregations, regarding:

- Physical distancing and protective equipment. These practices may include:
 - Requiring employees to wear cloth face coverings when unable to consistently maintaining 6 feet of physical distancing.
 - For as long as possible, allow telecommuting, especially for higher-risk individuals. Allowing flexible hours and staggered shifts to increase physical distancing for employees as they enter and leave the workplace.
 - Create signs and barriers that reinforce 6 feet of physical distancing for the protection of your employees and any members/public.
 - Marking the floors where necessary to provide worshipers and visitors clear direction when waiting to enter bathrooms, Sanctuaries, waiting to receive communion, etc.
 - Regularly announce throughout Worship services or other gatherings to encourage the maintenance of 6 feet of distancing.
 - Encouraging members to come to the facility during non-peak hours. Implementing special hours for seniors or other higher-risk individuals for ministry opportunities.
- General Sanitation. These practices include:
 - Encouraging everyone, especially employees to engage in hand washing (or the use of hand sanitizer) after physical interaction.
 - Having hand sanitizer available at the entrance of the building for those arriving.
 - Discouraging people from using other people's belongings and equipment, including phones, desks, offices, or other work tools. Avoid sharing hymnals and touching communion ware. When not possible, hand sanitizer should be used both prior to use of communal items and immediately after.
 - Routinely sanitizing shared surfaces and equipment throughout the day and between users and determine who will do the sanitizing.
- Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas. Follow guidance from the CDC for [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#), [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#) and [Cleaning and Disinfecting Non-emergency Transport Vehicles](#). These practices may include:
 - Having a clear plan for enhanced cleaning protocols, including who is responsible for each task. Modify worship times and building usage times if necessary to allow for deep cleaning.

- Dedicating a person during worship times to sanitize the entrance areas of church buildings, including sanitizing the doors handles or directing people to bathrooms or hand sanitizer stations.
- Cleaning communal items after each use, things like pens, coffee cups.
- Monitor community for COVID-19 symptoms and take action.
- Screen all employees daily by asking the following questions: Have you been told to quarantine/isolate by a medical provider or the health department? Have you had face-to-face contact for 10 or more minutes with someone who has COVID-19? Are you feeling ill and/or experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (regularly check the [CDC website](#) for an updated list)? If yes, they should not enter the worksite and should contact their doctor. If your congregation has a daycare, before/afterschool program or preschool, please follow all guidelines related to the care of children in your community but you may also want to screen all those in attendance prior to admission.
- Screen all those attending ministry opportunities or worship by asking the same questions and requesting those who may have been exposed not to attend. These questions could be posted at the entrances asking people not to enter the premises and risk exposing others if they know been exposed, whether or not they are currently symptomatic.
- Require any employee or member/visitor to quarantine/isolate according to the guidance of their medical provider or their local Health Department when they have:
 - A positive case for COVID-19; OR
 - Waiting for their results of a COVID-19 test; OR
 - Been in close contact of someone with COVID-19.
- Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to the workplace or congregational life until they are symptom-free and fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or have been released from quarantine/isolation. Employees should not be required to have a negative test to return to work.
- Consider implementing generous sick leave policies to encourage employees to report their illnesses and stay home.
- Maintain employee and member's privacy by not unnecessarily sharing information with others about their illness. Health information is protected by federal law.

Develop and implement ways to track close contact interactions

- Congregation should prepare and implement strategies for determining and tracking close contact interaction between staff and members/visitors (for example, keeping detailed appointment records, worship attendance, event participation so you can easily help public health determine close contacts, if needed). This will allow potential cases to be isolated quickly should an employee or member/visitor test positive for COVID-19, preventing future transmissions which protects health and the congregation's ability to serve the community.

Phase One: Gathering Physically Guidance

Individuals

All individuals should engage in the following phase-specific practices when in public and regularly sanitize frequently touched surfaces in their homes:

- Continue following the Core Actions (pages 6-7)
 - Physical distancing of at least 6 feet when in public, except with members of your household – “Farther is Safer.”
 - Wearing cloth face coverings when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained.
 - Handwashing with soap and water or hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled.
 - Cleaning surfaces with soap and water or disinfectant.
 - Staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine.
- Continue following the General Guidelines for that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Social settings and gatherings are limited to 10 people maximum (and 6 people maximum per table for public dining). Avoid social setting of more than 10 people that do not readily allow for maximizing physically distancing.
- Minimize non-essential travel and follow CDC guidelines regarding quarantine following travel.

Higher-risk Individuals

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Continue following the General Guidelines for that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Members of households with higher-risk residents should be aware that by returning to work or other environments where distancing is not practical, they could carry the virus back home.

General Guidance for everyone using a congregation’s facility

- Continue following the General Guidelines for that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Implement strict physical distancing protocols when possible.
- When returning to physical worship or expanding services, congregations individually must consider risk to members/visitors and employees.
- If possible, slowly transition to increasing services and ministries in order to give your organization time to build and test safety protocol.
- Close common areas where members/visitors are likely to congregate and interact.
- Strongly consider special accommodations for employees or members/visitors who are members of a higher-risk population.

Please refer to these [Public Health Principals for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors for additional guidance.](#)

Suggested Best Practices for Congregations in Phase One

The following tables are recommendations for your congregations to determine best practices.

Category	Phase One Guidance	Resources
Office Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to follow the “General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases” (page 11) and the Phase One “General Guidance for congregations” (page 6) except as modified below. Continue to encourage telework as much as possible Limit the number of staff present in the building at one time. When 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained, employees and others must wear face coverings. Sanitize surfaces and items between users and determine who is responsible for this. 	CDC
Worship Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible continue to offer online worship opportunities. When services are recorded onsite at the congregation maintain physical distancing recommendations and when physical distancing cannot be maintained, worship leaders must wear face coverings. Congregational singing is not recommended Sanitize surfaces and items between users. Treat all worship leaders, if recording at the same time, as if they are potentially infectious. When online worship is not available provide written materials to be distributed in a safe manner with limited physical interaction between people. In addition to local congregational worship resources, the Southeastern Synod Staff are providing sermons both video recorded, written and audio recording (accessible through a phone number) on the Southeastern Synod webpage in both English and Spanish. 	CDC, FAQ for Faith Leaders from NYC, Risk Assessment from WHO, Decision Tree from WHO CDC SINGING Southeastern Synod Website
Faith Formation Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person faith formation opportunities are not recommended for any age group. Utilizing online platforms to connect congregational members to bible studies, book discussion, prayer groups, women’s circles, men’s groups, youth groups etc. 	
Fellowship Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person fellowship opportunities are not recommended for any age group. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing online platforms to connect is encouraged 	
Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person pastoral care is not recommended Pastoral care can be conducted through phone and online platforms, including pastoral counseling, pre-marital counseling, prayers medical procedures. Congregations are encouraged to develop care teams to connect to all membership to determine needs of members and the community, especially those within the High-risk population and assist in providing food assistance and other needs while maintaining the Core Actions recommended on pages 6-7. 	
Outreach Ministry Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregations are not recommended to perform any social ministry outreach through a mass gathering of people. Congregations are encouraged to consult with local food ministries and determine the needs of the most vulnerable in their community and invite the congregation to respond by donating food and other necessary items. Donations sites should be accessible, preferably without additional contact with others. If people do come in contact with others they need to maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet and wearing protective cloth masks. When volunteering at social ministry sites all volunteers should be screened for exposure and illness prior to volunteering, volunteers must wear a cloth face covering if service provided requires workers to be within 6 feet of other volunteers. All delivers of food/supplies should be coordinated so that the exposure of the volunteers to the clients is limited, preferring a hands free handoff (i.e. placing groceries in a trunk of a car). 	
Childcare facilities within the congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare facilities are encouraged to follow local guidance from the Health department. Congregations should determine additional cleaning and sanitizing requirements for these types of programs to operate within their facilities. 	CDC, WHO
Outside Organizations Use of the Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the shelter-in-place phase of the COVID-19 crisis it is not recommended that 	

	<p>Congregations open their building to outside groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist those groups that provide support to the community such as AA/NA and Alnon to publicize online options for those needing such meetings. 	
Sports programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not open in Phase One 	NCAA CDC
Summer Camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not open in Phase One 	American Camp Association
Vegetable Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardens that supply fresh produce to local food cooperatives are deemed essential work and so work in those gardens is allowed. • Congregations are encouraged to follow the “General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases” (page 8) and to maintain physical distancing guidelines and when physical distancing cannot be maintained to have volunteers wear face coverings (masks). • Volunteers should be limited to allow for safe distancing and reduce the exposure to the virus. 	
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgrounds remain closed in Phase One 	
Food Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Ministries that provide meals for those in need are also deemed essential work and can continue with added protections. • Volunteers are encouraged to follow the “General Guidelines for that apply throughout all Phases” (page 11). • When 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained, volunteers and patrons must wear face coverings. • Sanitize surfaces and items between users. • Treat every patron and volunteer as if they are potentially infectious. • Curbside pickup should be offered, when possible. • Physical distancing of at least 6 feet must be maintained in both the kitchen and serving areas. Patrons cannot wait inside or congregate while waiting. • Condiments must be single-serve. • Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins (cloth face covering and gloves should be worn by staff while rolling silverware in a designated sanitary area) 	National Restaurant Association, FDA
Synod Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All physical gatherings of the Southeastern Synod are canceled during Phase One 	Southeastern Synod

Funerals/Memorial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible Rostered Leaders (pastors/deacon) can offer prayers remotely for the commendation of the dying either with the patient or the patient’s family. • Funerals/Memorials should occur preferably at the graveside with less than 10 people in attendance and allow for physical distancing recommendations of 6 feet and wearing a cloth face covering. • Gatherings should be for the service only. • Gathering of more than 10 people can be planned for a later time when it is safe to gather with the greater community. • Congregations are encouraged to support the families as they mourn with prayer and other appropriate modes of communication. 	National Funeral Directors Association
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Phase Two: Physically gathering guidance.

Individuals

All individuals should engage in the following phase-specific practices when in public and regularly sanitize frequently touched surfaces in their homes:

- Continue following the Core Actions (pages 6-7)
 - Physical distancing of at least 6 feet when in public, except with members of your household – “Farther is Safe.”
 - Wearing cloth face coverings when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained.
 - Handwashing with soap and water or hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled.
 - Cleaning surfaces with soap and water or disinfectant.
 - Staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine.
- Continue following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Social settings and gathering are limited to 50 people maximum. Avoid social setting of more than 50 people that do not readily allow for maximizing physical distancing.
- Non-essential travel can be cautiously resumed. Follow CDC guidelines regarding travel.

Higher-risk Individuals

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Continue following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Members of households with higher-risk residents should be aware that by returning to work or other environments where distancing is not practical, they could carry the virus back home.

General Guidance for Congregations and Other Organizations

- Continuing following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11)

- Continue to encourage telework, whenever possible and feasible with business operations.
- Continue to encourage online meeting to conduct meetings when possible.
- Implement strict physical distancing protocols when possible.
- When reopening or expanding services, congregations individually must consider risk to members/visitors and employees.
- If possible, slowly transition to increasing services in order to give your congregation time to build and test safety protocols.
- Limit use of common areas where members/visitor are likely to congregate and interact.
- Strongly consider special accommodations for higher-risk individuals.

Guidance for Resuming Public Worship

All congregations should engage in following the recommendations for individual core actions of physically distancing of at least 6 feet when in public worship, except with members of your household, wearing cloth face coverings to reduce the risk and when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, handwashing with soap and water or hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled, cleaning surfaces with soap and water or disinfectant, and encouraging members/visitors to stay home when they are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine. It is the responsibility of each congregation to determine when and how they will return to public worship basing their decision on local, state and federal recommendations, but congregations should also consider how their membership might respond and determine a path based on the readiness of the congregation to gather together following the policies and procedures of that congregation.

Congregational COVID-19 Taskforces should develop congregational plans specific for their context to provide for the safety and well-being of those who gather. They should take into consideration the following:

- Whether to keep an online meeting option for those who are afraid or unable to attend your service in person.
- Whether to offer multiple services to encourage a greater chance of physical distancing. One way to ensure services are evenly spread is to have people sign up for a service. For example, use Facebook events or a Doodle poll asking people to mark which event(s) they'll attend.
- Determine how many volunteers you have available to assist. Limit volunteers to those who do not have preexisting conditions and those who are under 65 years of age.
- Consider how people will enter the facility and the signage necessary to communicate the Core Actions mentioned above and how these actions may be accomplished in this facility, including where cloth face coverings (or alternative products) will be available for those not having one when entering.
- Consider all people wear cloth face coverings, including worship leaders at all times.
- Greeters and Volunteers should be able to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building. Train them beforehand if possible.
- How doors will be cleaned and sanitized between services
- How bulletins (if used) will be distributed. (For example, will they be placed on pews or chairs beforehand? If not, what alternative methods will be employed to eliminate hand to

- hand transfers?). Encourage people to take the bulletin home to be recycled or put in the trash. Do not reuse bulletins or seasonal inserts. Congregations may need to consider how to project liturgies, if possible.
- How to handle and communicate guidelines regarding sharing of the peace or greeting one another, offering alternative non-physical touch greetings while keeping physical distancing.
 - How children sermons/children church will be done, if it is at all possible to safely gather children for such a message. Congregations may consider continuing to produce online resources to offer such messages.
 - Will a congregation continue to offer a Nursery with all the safety considerations that must be made for volunteers and the children in the nursery? Consider removing everything nonessential from the room to limit surface for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses. See the preschool/children section for more information to consider.
 - How to communicate the need to not social gather for fellowship time/coffee hours?
 - How bathrooms can be sanitized and cleaned to eliminate the possible transmission of the virus.
 - Providing Hand Sanitizing stations at points of entry or where potential contamination can occur (bathrooms).
 - Water fountains produce a potential risk for transmittance, will a congregation provide alternative sources of water or encourage people to bring their own from home.
 - How will pews/chairs be sanitized between services or following service
 - Clean the pulpit after every use and develop new ways or places to have readers so that the person reading the lesson isn't reading from the same place someone is preaching from.
 - Wipe down all music stands between use.
 - Avoid passing microphones during the service.
 - How will communion be distributed? Guidelines recommend only serving bread, preferably wafers to eliminate the potential of transmission from the person serving it and the person receiving it. How will communion assistants/pastor sanitize their hands prior to distribution? Will they wear a cloth face covering while distributing? Will congregants be asked to wear a face covering until after they have received the element and only when they are no longer physical close to the person distributing remove it to consume the element? Will communion rails be cleaned and or sanitized between people or will congregants be asked to remain standing and walk by the person distributing the element(s)? See recommendations from the [ELCA here](#).
 - In congregations where the tradition is to hold hands with the person standing near you to pray the Lord's Prayer it is recommended that that tradition be stopped for the time being.
 - Congregations will need to determine ways to collect offerings/attendance cards, encouraging when able online giving. Passing of the plates is not recommended.
 - Congregations will need to determine how that offering will be counted, entered into the records and deposited in a safe manner, providing necessary sanitation cleaners prior to and following the process. Those counting the offering are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings to discourage touching your face following touching checks or currency. Physical distancing guidelines should be kept as well.

- Following worship greeting people as they leave should be discontinued and those in attendance should be encouraged to leave promptly to discourage social gatherings.
- Congregations should limit all other gatherings and encourage other forms of faith formation.
- Playgrounds should be closed
- Congregations will need to determine how music ministries can function, singing together, even from a distance is a risky behavior due to the spreading of droplets/aerosols which carry the virus farther and can stay suspended. Cloth masks are unlikely to prevent the risk. Learn more [here](#).
- Congregations should continue to support and care for individuals who are at risk.
- Congregations should be prepared to request self-isolation/quarantining (for the recommended time) of all members and visitors who have been exposed to someone who was asymptomatic but now tests positive and is having symptoms relating to COVID-19
- If someone has worshiped physically in the congregation and now is test positive for COVID-19, congregations should consider how to sanitize the facility and determine if the congregation should return to Phase One.
- Congregations should plan for the potential of staff or ministers contracting COVID-19 and establish procedures for such an event, including establishing safe ways to have access to computer systems, online accounts etc.
- In the event of a congregation having an outbreak of COVID-19 patients or the Pastor or Rostered Minister being affected, the leadership of the congregation should inform the [Bishop](#) and the [Synod Staff](#) as soon as possible.
- Congregations should adapt Facility Use policies for outside groups and implement ways for those groups to inform the staff or leadership if participants in those programs have tested positive after attending events in the church facility. Those outside groups should be encouraged to communicate with their participants of any potential transmission.
- Congregations will need to adapt Wedding Policies to reflect the physical distancing requirements and the size of the participants.
- Congregations will also need to establish guidelines restrictions for Funerals/memorials held within the facility.
- Congregations should require all required maintenance of the facility be done with the utmost of care to limit the exposure of the disease, requiring companies to follow the guidelines of hand washing and the wearing of cloth face coverings.
- Determine how microphones, headphones, computers, laptops, etc. used in worship will be cleaned after every use. Keep a record of when each item was cleaned. Do not use water. Rubbing alcohol or alcohol-based cleaners are best.
- Rotate your tech team if possible, encouraging those who feel sick or tired not to enter the facility.
- Congregations that intend to continue classes, should be prepared to clean all surfaces prior to and following classes.
- Consider whether you will have Sunday school or small groups. Make sure you are communicating if and when these classes will resume.
- Consider dividing your groups to maintain physical distancing standards. Consider multiple day opportunities

- Use of any congregation owned vehicles should be limited and sanitizing procedures followed.
- Donation bins should continue to be encouraged to support those in the community in need, especially during these economically difficult times. To reduce the risk to volunteers collecting those donations and delivering them to the agencies that distribute precautions should be taken and additional cleaning or safety equipment used when gathering and delivering donated items.
- For now, communal meals should be discouraged, due to the increased exposure and the limited ability to wear cloth face coverings.
- The individual COVID-19 Taskforce of the congregation needs to stay informed of the local, state and federal guidelines, as well as the recommendations from the Southeastern Synod or Churchwide offices of the ELCA. It is recommended that the congregation establish a Disaster Relief Coordinator for the congregation that would be registered with the Southeastern Synod Disaster Relief Team to receive communication and up to date guidelines throughout this pandemic.

Preschool and Children

Congregations should check with local, state and federal recommendations regarding preschools, daycares and before/after school programs to determine the necessary precautions needed.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 2 years of age and under do not wear masks or face coverings. Please keep this in mind as you make decisions.
- Be aware that cloth face covering may scare small children.
- Consider not opening children ministry opportunities on the first Sunday back. Some churches are choosing to reopen Sunday School and other programming when schools are open.
- Consider pre-registering children to limit how many are in any room at a time. Depending on the size of the room you may need to limit the size.
- Limit leaders in the children's ministry areas to those who do not have pre-existing conditions or who are not in the High Risk category.
- Have extra volunteers to help in the younger age groups where some children may suffer from separation anxiety after only being with parents for a long time.
- Decide where and how child drop-off will happen to eliminate additional exposure to those in attendance.
- Have a check list of what's been cleaned and when in each room.
- Develop a list of procedures for your volunteers. Train them on this list through an online platform prior to the first meeting.
- Decide if programs like Vacation Bible School can function in your community and develop appropriate procedures to handle families from the community, making sure you can limit the number of children in each group. Consider an online version that will allow people to continue to participate, while providing the necessary protection.

Phase Three: Gathering physically guidance.

Individuals

All individuals should engage in the following phase-specific practices when in public and regularly sanitize frequently touched surfaces in their homes:

- Continue following the Core Actions (pages 6-7):
 - o Physical distancing of at least 6 feet when in public, except with members of your household – “Farther is Safer.”
 - o Wearing cloth face coverings when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained.
 - o Handwashing with soap and water or hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled.
 - o Cleaning surfaces with soap and water or disinfectant.
 - o Staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine.
- Continue following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Social settings and gatherings are limited to 100 people maximum. Avoid social settings of more than 100 people that do not readily allow for maximizing physical distancing.
- Non-essential travel can be resumed. Follow CDC guidelines regarding travel.

Higher-risk Individuals

- Can slowly resume public interaction, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- Continue following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).

General Guidance for Congregations and Other Organizations

- Continuing following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11).
- Continue to encourage telework, whenever possible and feasible with business operations.
- Continue to encourage online meeting to conduct meetings when possible.
- Implement strict physical distancing protocols when possible.
- When reopening or expanding services, congregations individually must consider risk to members/visitors and employees.
- If possible, slowly transition to increasing services in order to give your congregation time to build and test safety protocols.
- Limit use of common areas where members/visitor are likely to congregate and interact.
- Strongly consider special accommodations for higher-risk individuals.

Closing remarks: Guidance for Resuming Congregational Life

As communities expand lifting restrictions, congregations will need to consider how ministries that were done prior to the COVID-19 crisis can be restarted (or whether they should be discontinued).

Congregations are encouraged to continue following recommendations for Individuals, following the General Guidelines that apply throughout all Phases (page 11). Congregations should continue following safety plans regarding the cleaning of the facility and promoting ways to reduce the risk for transmission with physical distancing and the wearing of cloth coverings. Expanding the size of communal groups should not indicate that congregations are returning to “business as usual” pre-COVID 19 programming. Because some aspects this crisis are currently unknown and (as well as recommendations of what will be possible as restrictions are lifted), further recommendations will be communicated through the Southeastern Synod COVID-19 Taskforce and the Synod Office. Congregational Disaster Relief Coordinators will be emailed updated recommendations when they come available. Communication to the will also be sent to the whole of the Synod. Our congregational communities will be encouraged to incorporate new state and federal guidance. This process will allow our communities to address emerging challenges and opportunities that may present themselves on the road ahead.

List of Websites in Document

- Southeastern Synod website (page 3): www.elca-ses.org
- ELCA Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns: Returning to Public Worship: www.elca.org/publichealth www.elca.org/publichealth
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (page 6): www.cdc.gov
- The CDC has guidance on how to make, wear and care for a cloth face covering (page 6): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- When and how to wash your hands (page 6): <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- EPA-registered household disinfectants (page 7): <https://www.epa.gov/newsroom/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- CDC guidance for caring for someone who is sick at home (page 7): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>
- Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 from OSHA (page 9): <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- The CDC has guidance on how to make, wear and care for a cloth face covering (page 10): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- EPA-registered household disinfectants (page 11): <https://www.epa.gov/newsroom/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities (page 12): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Non-emergency Transport Vehicles (page 12): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html>
- CDC: People Who are at Higher Risk (page 12) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
- The symptoms of COVID-19 (page 13): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidelines for Governors for additional guidance (page 14): <https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/publications/public-health-principles-for-a-phased-reopening-during-covid-19-guidance-for-governors>
- CDC (page 15): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>
- CDC (page 15): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>
- FAQ for Faith Leaders from NYC (page 15): <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/covid-19-faith-faq.pdf>
- Risk Assessment from WHO (page 15): <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/practical-considerations-and-recommendations-for-religious-leaders-and-faith-based-communities-in-the-context-of-covid-19>
- Decision Tree from WHO (page 15): https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/who-2019-ncov-mg-decision-tree-religious.pdf?sfvrsn=f3433c0a_2
- CDC Singing (page 15): <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>

- Southeastern Synod Website (page 15): <https://www.elca-ses.org/>
- CDC (page 16): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- WHO (page 16): <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1q29uwq5yyzyoy/AACQZPIXAJFLdlrQcmt8iwj2a?dl=0&prevlew=key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-schools-march-2020.pdf>
- NCAA (page 17): <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/coronavirus-covid-19>
- CDC (page 17): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/park-administrators.html>
- American Camp Association (page 17): <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-camps>
- National Restaurant Association (page 17): <https://restaurant.org/Covid19>
- FDA (page 17): <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-updelivery-services-during-covid-19>
- Southeastern Synod (page 17): www.elca-ses.org
- National Funeral Directors Association (page 18): <https://www.nfda.org/covid-19/visitations-funerals>
- Wisconsin Council of Churches: Church Music in the Age of COVID-19 (page 21): <https://www.wichurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Returning-to-Church-Church-Music-final.pdf>

COVID-19 FACILITY REENTRY CHECKLIST

GENERAL AREAS:

- Ensure all custodial supplies and equipment are clean, stocked and available. Including additional gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, soap and paper products
- Remove all unnecessary items from the property that potentially cause cross contamination (i.e. flyers, brochures, prayer cards, devotional books)
- Check all appliances for proper operation, re-light gas appliances, replace air filters
- In restrooms, check all fixtures and run/flush/let them run for a bit
- Ensure all fill valves and flappers function, replace as necessary
- Empty and clean ice makers. Let them fill one time, dump the ice, then refill
- Pour at least a half-gallon of water down every active floor drain
- Ensure all lighting fixtures work and replace bulbs as needed

FACILITY EXTERIOR:

- Check all entrances, remove any collected debris
- Check all operation of all exterior doors, lubricate all hardware as needed
- Clean glass, door handles, and doors
- Inspect or install exterior signage adding instructions regarding COVID-19 recommendations
- Check all downspout discharge areas, ensure they are clear of debris
- Clean and sanitize all playgrounds, exterior children's areas adding instructional signage as needed
- Trim all trees and planting, especially around entrances and walkways

FACILITY INTERIOR:

- Clean, disinfect and sanitize all tables and chairs, paying attention to the underside of each
- Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all toys and determine if they will be accessible
- Clean, disinfect and sanitize all "high traffic" areas. This can include keyboards, phones, door hardware, elevator call buttons, handrails, water fountains, bathroom partition hardware, backs of chairs/pews, offering plates, computer stations, HVAC controls, light switches
- Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all trash receptacles, changing tables, cribs, and the walls in children's areas between 18"-32" off the floor.
- Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all floors
- Run your HVAC system or open windows to allow for fresh air exchange prior to occupation
- Set correct temperatures at all thermostats
- Clean, disinfect, and sanitize all windowsills, ledges, or countertops
- Check all portable fire extinguishers
- Check all emergency exit signs and lighting for proper operations. Replace fixtures/batteries as required
- Inspect any food in the facility for condition and date range
- Inspect all first-aid supplies, especially dates, replace as required
- Inspect fire, intrusion alarms, sprinkler systems for proper operation.
- Inspect AED. Check dates and ensure batteries are operational.

- Inspect /check sound system for proper operation
- Inspect/check all AV equipment for alignment, focus and operation
- If possible, perform a tech run-through at least a week prior to the onset of services
- Perform additional dusting and cleaning on the seating areas
- Remove or clean all hymnals prior to worship and develop a plan to continued cleaning

Mental Health Resources:

Southeastern Synod - Mental Health Resources & Referrals:

<https://sites.google.com/view/ses-mentalhealth>

Here are some documents and articles for your care in this difficult time.

1. One-page flyer with several phone numbers for COVID-19 hotlines and "warmlines" to address some of your emotional care needs:
 - a. <https://www.elca-ses.org/files/documents+%26+brochures/files/pastoral+care/mentalwellnesshandout.pdf>
2. This document contains several hotlines and links to state resources to the 4-state region of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.
 - a. <https://sites.google.com/view/ses-mentalhealth/covid-19-resources>
3. The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) has curated resources on mindfulness, spirituality, and practical reflection during this COVID-19 pandemic.
 - a. <https://www.acpe.edu/ACPE/News/Stories/2020/COVID19Resources.aspx>
4. Coping with COVID-19 - A Psycho-Spiritual Approach
 - a. <https://www.elca-ses.org/files/documents+%26+brochures/news+and+announcements/coping+with+covid+19+-+a+psycho-spiritual+approach.pdf>
5. Secondary Trauma, Burnout, Stress, and Self Care: Opportunities and Challenges
 - a. <https://www.elca-ses.org/files/content/committees/mental+health/mhtf+burnout+and+stress.pdf>
6. Societal Chaplaincy: Preparing for the Storm to Come
 - a. <https://www.ntnl.org/societal-chaplaincy-preparing-for-the-storm-to-come/>
7. Stress and Coping (CDC):
 - a. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
8. Providing Spiritual and Pastoral Care During COVID-19:
 - a. <https://hospicefoundation.org/Education/Spiritual-Care-and-COVID-19>
9. A Guide to Pastoral Care and Connection in a Time of Physical Distancing:
 - a. <https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/pastoral-distance>

Resources from the *Youth Ministry Institute* specifically produced with YOUTH in mind:

1. Supporting youth experiencing depression
 - a. <http://yminstitute.com/what-if-students-are-struggling-more-than-the-norm/>
2. Grief in Times of Trauma
 - a. <http://yminstitute.com/grief-in-times-of-trauma/>
3. Helping Kids and Teens Deal with Grief
 - a. <https://www.strong4life.com/en/pages/behavior/articles/helping-kids-and-teens-deal-with-grief>