

## Post-COVID-19 Trends that Churches are Utilizing for Health and Safety

**Touchless Visitor Experience:** Churches are not like grocery stores (where people touch and move products from place to place). There is no reason why churches couldn't pull off a "touchless worship experience." As an application of this, many churches are turning to the following policies:

- Doors propped open (or opened by door-attendants)
- Ropes and Stanchions to create One-way egress/ingress to facilitate people movement
- Touchless communion (eg., pre-packaged communion elements opened by individuals)
- Stationary Offering Boxes (instead of passing offering plates and buckets)
- Family friendly services, with no childcare

**Constant Sanitizing Process:** The good news is that most churches are only open to the public in limited time windows (such as Sunday mornings / Wednesday nights). Therefore many of them have found it reasonable to hire or recruit sanitation teams, or train and equip volunteers, who focus on constantly cleaning specific areas (such as restrooms) or Egress/Ingress points (like narrow hallways or hand-railings). To make this easier, many churches are employing additional sanitizing procedures such as:

- Free Cloth Masks / Rubber Gloves
- Hand-washing /sanitizing stations upon entrance
- Touchless Infrared Thermometers (like those used in airports) for kids.

CDC cleaning and disinfecting guidelines can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>. All surfaces should be cleaned including restrooms, seats, doors and handles, etc.

**Socially Distant Seating Strategies:** Once again, the problem of community spread is less about how many people and more about how confined is the space or how good is the ventilation. Thus, churches are achieving social distancing the following ways:

- Spacing vehicles in the parking lot, allowing an empty space in between each
- Reducing the overall number of seats – which is becoming increasingly easier as churches are trending away from having pews to having chairs.
- Increasing the overall number of church services – which is already common for churches to do around holidays.
- By utilizing free seat reservation software (like theaters or sporting events use tickets) – enabling families to be able to sit together while simultaneously giving ushers the ability to space groups apart.
- By creating Over-flow Video Rooms: In order to get Occupancy Permits, most churches are required to have significantly more square-footage than most retail stores. Thus, churches tend to have a large number of un-used square-footage relative to their actual occupancy. These space could be perfect for video-overflow rooms if the capacity of the main auditorium is too full.
- By Giving Door Assignments to decrease traffic
- By having a plan for restroom capacity to allow for appropriate social distancing within stalls and sinks