

Considering reopening your church?

As COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted around the Division, the union executive secretaries from around TED have been sharing tips. What is very clear: one size does not fit all. There are different national recommendations and realities. Churches and worship styles vary greatly. This is a dynamic document and the following are some things to take into consideration.

DO

- Appoint a local Health & Safety Officer in each church
- **Every** local church needs to carry out a risk assessment. Ultimately it is the local church who can best evaluate the risks in opening the church
- Carry out a deep clean before reopening a church
- Have hand sanitiser stations at strategic points throughout the church
- Follow Government guidance and regulations
- Remove hymnbooks or pew Bibles, on a temporary basis, as these may spread the virus
- Communicate with members prior to re-opening the church telling them of what safety measures have been put in place, any changes in worship patterns, and remind them if they are unwell, not to come to church
- Put up signs reminding people of the need to socially distance and use hand sanitiser and masks (if appropriate)

DO NOT

- Do not use air conditioning or fans in churches, as this can spread COVID-19
- Do not share handheld microphones
- Do not shake hands or hug

CONSIDER

- Transitioning using smaller groups in homes
- Hold several services to accommodate social distancing
- Time to clean and sanitise the pulpit, microphones and common areas between services, particularly door handles and toilets
- Separate services for older people
- Using masks
- Keeping windows open to provide good ventilation
- Where there are limits to numbers, have someone counting as people enter the building to ensure that regulations are met
- Clear instructions regarding social distancing, e.g. blocking off alternate rows to allow for social distancing
- Singing: when people sing, they spread more “droplets”. Consider not singing in church or make provision for greater distancing measures
- Where possible introducing a “one-way” system, where people enter and exit through different doors, so minimising contact with doorways
- Have deacons dismiss the congregation by rows, to reduce crowding and close contact

GOING FORWARD

- Blended services: some people attending church and others on livestream. This is one way of potentially keeping contact with those who have started attending during the COVID-19 pandemic.

USEFUL LINKS

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-prevent-germs-from-spreading/>
- <https://healthministries.com/coronavirus>
- <https://www.adventistreview.org/covid-19-updates>