

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs for Faith and Humanistic Community Leaders

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If you lead a faith-based organization, you may have questions on how to handle matters related to COVID-19. Below are some answers to the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from Faith and Humanistic Community Leaders on the virus and its prevention.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

For the most recent updates on COVID-19 in Orange County, please visit Orange County Government's Coronavirus webpage at [www.ocfl.net/coronavirus](http://www.ocfl.net/coronavirus).

*Note: The information provided in this document is not a substitute for legal advice, but it does provide basic information for Faith and Humanistic Community Leaders. All legal questions regarding your place of worship should be directed to the appropriate agency. Last Updated: 6/10/2020*

### 1. Are churches, synagogues and other places of worship able to hold services?

Yes. The [Governor's Executive Order 20-91](#), as extended by [Executive Orders 20-112](#) and [20-139](#), identifies attending religious services at churches, synagogues and other places of worship as an "essential activity." Any open building or venue should continue to follow appropriate social distancing and sanitation procedures. The Florida Department of Health encourages these entities to follow [CDC guidance specific to faith organizations](#).

### 2. What are the limitations/restrictions currently in-place regarding the amount of people allowed to participate in a religious gathering?

Orange County Government encourages residents and visitors who participate in a religious gathering to practice suggested [CDC guidelines specific to Faith Organizations](#) for COVID-19 virus protection. These provisions are guidelines and are not mandatory nor intended to restrict the free exercise of religion.

### 3. Who is at the highest risk for COVID-19?

According to the CDC, those above 65 years of age or individuals of any age with serious underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Pursuant to [Mayor Jerry Demings' Emergency Executive Order 2012-12](#), residents in these categories are strongly encouraged to stay home, but if they attend religious services where CDC guidelines cannot be met, they are advised that they are putting themselves at greater risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus.

### 4. What should I do if someone I know has COVID-19 or if I believe someone has it?

If congregants believe they may be infected with COVID-19, encourage them to speak with their healthcare provider to determine their options for getting tested. The [CDC Symptom Checker](#) can help individuals make informed decisions on seeking medical attention and testing. For a list of local testing options, visit [www.ocfl.net/coronavirus](http://www.ocfl.net/coronavirus).

### 5. How can my faith-based organization lower the chance that staff, volunteers and congregants become sick?

According to the CDC, the best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Start by encouraging your staff, volunteers and congregants to use [everyday preventive actions](#), such as **washing hands often, avoiding close contact** with people, and **covering coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or the inside of the elbow. Be sure you have supplies on hand, including soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, tissues and trash baskets.

**6. How can places of worship work to slow the spread of COVID-19?**

They can play a vital role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by following CDC guidelines. If there are challenges with maintaining social distancing, Faith and Humanistic Leaders are urged to hold services by either electronic means – such as Facebook Live, YouTube, Zoom, or similar platforms – or by conducting drive-in-style services so people can remain in their vehicles while they worship.

**7. Where can I find health data on COVID-19 cases in Orange County?**

Up-to-date information on the spread of the virus can be found on the Florida Department of Health - Orange County's website at [www.orange.floridahealth.gov](http://www.orange.floridahealth.gov).

**8. How can I find COVID-19 testing sites in the community?**

For a listing of drive-through testing site locations in Orange County, visit [www.ocfl.net/coronavirus](http://www.ocfl.net/coronavirus).

**9. Are there guidelines I can follow/implement at my place of worship?**

Yes, there are a variety of suggested guidelines for places of worship to follow. Faith and Humanistic Leaders are encouraged to utilize the resources found on the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](https://www.hhs.gov) and [Orange County Government](https://www.oran.fl.gov) websites to develop action plans and safety protocols for congregants, staff and volunteers.

**10. How can safe social distancing measures be practiced in my place of worship?**

Social distancing, also called "physical distancing," is defined by the CDC as keeping (6) feet of space between yourself and other people outside the home. Some basic social distancing guidelines for places of worship can be found on the [Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith](https://www.cdc.gov) page on the CDC's website.

**11. Where do I find information about COVID-19 safety protocols for childcare programs, classroom facilities and schools?**

Several recommendations and guidelines for schools and childcare can be found on the CDC's website under [Child Care, Education and Youth Programs](https://www.cdc.gov).

**12. What sanitation protocols can I implement to limit the spread of COVID-19 in my place of worship?**

According to the CDC, persons should clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often at least once per day ([CDC guidance on Cleaning Disinfecting Guide](https://www.cdc.gov)). Cleaning surfaces and objects not ordinarily sanitized daily, such as doorknobs, light switches and cabinet handles, is critical. Use general cleaning agents and follow all label directions. For disinfection, most common household disinfectants should be effective.

**13. Is it permissible to serve meals on-site at my place of worship?**

Yes. It is permissible to serve meals at your place of worship. Food service should be conducted hygienically while maintaining social distancing and observing all [CDC COVID-19 Food Safety guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov). To ensure social-distancing efforts, mark the floor near distribution points with six (6) feet of spacing.

**14. My place of worship is very involved in community service. How can I ensure volunteer work is managed safely?**

- Avoid bringing together large gatherings of people. Host all volunteer meetings and community events virtually.
- When making food or supply deliveries in the community, [no contact deliveries](#) are recommended. Keep at least six (6) feet of distance between people.
- If volunteers cannot avoid direct contact with people, make sure they are properly protected with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as a face covering and gloves.
- Screen volunteers daily using the [CDC Symptom Checker](#).
- Encourage volunteers to practice proper hygiene and sanitation processes by following the CDC guidelines for [infection control among community organizers](#).

*Source: [healthcareready.org](http://healthcareready.org)*

**15.I am in need of COVID-19 signage to post in my place of worship. Where is the best place to obtain these materials?**

The [CDC](#), [Florida Department of Health](#) and [Orange County Government](#) all provide a variety of downloadable informational signage that can be posted inside facilities. In addition, it is recommended you check with your respective faith and or humanistic organization to see if they have signage resources that can be provided for posting.