



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Kansas-Nebraska
Conference Headquarters

April 27, 2020

Dear Church leaders,

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As our nation begins the process of reopening, we are eager that all are responsible and alert to what is best for each congregation.

Here are a few suggestions to be considered as a decision is made for your congregation.

1. Any decision to reopen needs to be made by the church board.
2. The different state and county health departments have different orders in place for churches reopening. Be sure you know and follow the rules that govern your location.
For example: *The Health Department in Kansas stated after May 4 churches may resume services as long as they maintain the 6 ft. social distancing of non-family individuals (which may limit the numbers of people able to attend the gathering), no passing of items is permitted between congregants and recommends the most vulnerable members of the community not attend.*
3. If your church does decide to reopen, do not promote this as a “grand re-opening.” All the states are talking about a “gradual” staged process of ramping up business and personal activities in 14-day increments. No one should feel any pressure to return to church attendance or to remain at home. The most medically vulnerable should be the last to return to public services.
4. Continue offering online services – many who will not feel like coming will still be able to be part of the live service at the church – and many guests have found a spiritual home in the online services churches are providing.

If you do reopen, please be attentive to the following issues:

- All surfaces likely to be touched should be disinfected, before and after services – top rail of pews, hymnals, doorknobs, counters, tables, etc.
- Greeters should be instructed to open doors and step aside to maintain the 6 ft. social distancing. (If doors can be propped open, that is even better!)
- Make announcements verbally or project them. In Kansas you cannot hand out printed bulletins.
- Continue to observe social distancing – for example, have worshipers sit in every other pew. Of course, people from the same household can sit together. For now, greet others with a wave or bow instead of shaking hands or hugging.
- Post notices about what constitutes appropriate social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitizers in several locations. Tell people where they are.
- Sabbath school classes for older youth (*primary through teens*) and adults need to observe the 6-ft. social distancing guidelines.
- It is not advised that Sabbath school classes be held for beginners or kindergarten unless all the students are of the same household.
- Instead of passing the offering plates, have a designated place for offerings to be turned in and make sure everyone knows where it is. Continue promoting use of Adventistgiving.org.

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- For now, fellowship dinners violate social distancing recommendations, so please forego having them until it is considered safe. Likewise, foot-washing and communion should not take place at this time.
- Unless you have room for adequate distancing, it is recommended that music groups and choirs not practice or perform.

Our advice is that if we are going to err, we should err on the side of caution. If you have any questions or we can be of any help, please contact us. We want this process to be as positive, Spirit-led, and safe as possible. Let's respect the feelings of others so our corporate worship can be a safe place.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Philippians 2:3,4).

Thank you for the good leadership you provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Ron Carlson
president