

## • CDC Information

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we deal with this fast changing pandemic, it is my goal to keep you updated. First, a word from Scripture. The word that comes to mind in a time like this is “Presence.” When I searched for definitions, I found “a rich, powerful connection to God.” Here is how Erdman’s Bible dictionary defines the word: “Christian theology envisions God as omnipresent, either present everywhere, or available to everyone wherever they are though not spatially distributed himself.”

### **God interacting with Humanity**

Early in the first five books of the Old Testament “present” is the manner in which God connects with His people.

In Genesis 3:8, He walks in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve. You see this intimate relationship with the creation in the beginning.

*“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”*

After the fall God seeks out His creation, which is not hiding from the Creator. There are numerous examples of a very present God. He wrestles with Jacob on the riverbank (Genesis 32:22–32). He talks with Abraham in the shade of the oaks and with Gideon at the winepress.

### **God desires to be Present in Our Lives.**

#### **God promised Moses His presence.**

*And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” Ex. 33:14 (ESV).*

#### **We see God’s presence in Philipians.**

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, Phil 2:12*

And hear the promise of God’s presence remaining in Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 13:5.

- *“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
- *“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”*

### **Prayer**

## **From the CDC: Considerations for Postponing or Cancelling a Mass Gathering**

There are a number of factors to consider when determining the need to postpone or cancel a large gathering. These include:

**The overall number of attendees.** Larger gatherings (for example, more than 10 people) offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission.

**The number of people attending who are at greater risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19.** Older adults and persons with severe pre-existing health conditions are thought to be at increased risk.

**The density of attendees within a confined area.** Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within 6 feet).

**The potential economic impact to participants, attendees, staff, and the larger community.**

**The level of transmission in your local community and the level of transmission in the areas from which your attendees will travel.** To better understand the level of community transmission in your community (and in the communities from which your attendees will be traveling), consult with your local and/or state public health department.

**If there are ways in which to significantly reduce the number of attendees.** For example, for sporting events or school concerts, organizers could consider holding the event but significantly reduce the number of audience members.

**At a minimal-to-moderate level of community transmission, it is recommended to:**

Cancel community-wide mass gatherings (for example, >50 people; **the cutoff threshold is at the discretion of community leadership based on the [current circumstances the community is facing and the nature of the event pdf icon](#)**) or move to smaller groupings.

Cancel gatherings of more than 10 people for organizations that serve [higher-risk populations pdf icon](#).

**At a substantial level of community transmission, it is recommended to cancel mass gatherings of any size.**

## **Steps to Plan, Prepare, and Proceed with a Mass Gathering**

The details of your emergency operations plan should be based on the size and duration of your events, demographics of the participants, complexity of your event operations, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer.

***Review the existing emergency operations plans for your venues***

**Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team at your venues.**

Discuss the emergency operations plans and determine how they may impact aspects of your events, such as personnel, security, services and activities, functions, and resources. Work with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team to prepare for the key prevention strategies outlined in this guidance. Develop a contingency plan that addresses various scenarios described below which you may encounter during a COVID-19 outbreak.

**Establish relationships with key community partners and stakeholders.** When forming key relationships for your events, include relevant partners such as the local public health department, community leaders, faith-based organizations, vendors, suppliers, hospitals, hotels, airlines, transportation companies, and law enforcement. Collaborate and coordinate with them on broader planning efforts. Clearly identify each partner's role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. Contact your local public health department for a copy of their outbreak response and mitigation plan for your community. Participate in community-wide emergency preparedness activities.

***Address key prevention strategies in your emergency operations plan***

**Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions.** Use [health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as CDC](#) or your local public health department to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants to engage in [everyday preventive actions](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- [Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.](#)

Handshakes and “high-fives” are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person. As a way of decreasing the social pressure to engage in these common behaviors, consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the gathering.

**Distance Counseling Available to Reduce Exposure to COVID-19**

If you or a person you know is anxious, worried, depressed, or struggling with other life challenges and need someone to talk to, our professional, mental health counseling team is [here](#).

Because Lutheran Family Service offers distance counseling using your smartphone or computer, you don't have to worry about exposure to COVID-19 (novel coronavirus 2019) during your session.

We serve people from all walks of life, not just Lutheran or Christian, experiencing difficult times with our Christ-centered, counseling ministry.

If you're currently struggling with any of life's challenges and want help to better cope, manage and overcome, contact us today at: <https://lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact/>

Worship Resources from Concordia Publishing House:

[https://www.cph.org/t-bestill-worship.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2geeT-01tsslrau\\_3BsqBVT0eyzh16qz8tko-b0wzDL5pgmU7iesfQXvU](https://www.cph.org/t-bestill-worship.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2geeT-01tsslrau_3BsqBVT0eyzh16qz8tko-b0wzDL5pgmU7iesfQXvU)

**In the Service of an Awesome God,**

**Rev. B. Keith Haney, (Romans 12:6-8)**

***Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.***

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