

FAQS provided by the PA Department of Health during a religious leader conference call.

The religious community is part of life-sustaining services and plays a vital role in helping control this virus. Governor Wolf has not asked churches to close. Spiritual leaders are needed for their guidance and direction to their church members and the community.

The response from the state is three-fold:

1. Mitigation (Prevention) – Practicing cleanliness and social distancing (6 ft. of separation between people). The virus is spread through respiratory droplets. The most susceptible are the elderly and people with kidney or lung issues. Younger people are not immune. 40% of cases are under age fifteen. Small children are less likely to contract the virus.
2. Testing – This is being done through hospitals and independent labs.
3. Preparation of the Health Care System – Extra staff, beds, and supplies along with implementing emergency standards of care.

### Can we have church meetings and gatherings like funerals and weddings?

The governor's order does not apply to religious events. Religious services are not prohibited. But the less people you have, the safer it will be. Practice safe social distancing. The less people you have, the safer it will be.

### Can clergy live stream church services in an empty church building alone or with a worship team?

Yes. The fewer people the better and take all the necessary precautions.

### Is there less concern if your church is in a rural area vs urban?

No. Churches should do their best not to meet.

### Should we shutdown daycares and preschools?

Yes. [Please see the PA Department of Health website for more information.](#) There have been some exceptions for centers that serve health care workers.

### What about meal delivers, food preparation, and food pantries?

Try to make any aid efforts as remote as possible. Meal deliveries should be left on the doorstep. You should not have direct contact. Also, consider anything you can do online or over the phone (i.e. scheduling, ordering, and general contact and follow up). Food preparation is fine follow best practices, hand washing and all healthy preventative measures.

### What are the best steps for decontamination in churches?

Follow these steps: [Disinfecting Your Facility if Someone is Sick on the CDC website.](#)