



Guidelines to Reduce Spread of COVID-19 when Meeting Together

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24). Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)

We are blessed with the freedom to worship, whether worship is attending a service at the church or it is in another location or takes another form. As Christians, we seek to extend God's love to every person by caring for those around us, whether within our church community or other communities outside of our church. In the context of the current pandemic, how one balances the need to meet together to encourage one another with the need to look to the interests of others is a personal choice that others should not second guess. And when balancing the needs, one must take into account not only physical wellbeing, but one's social or psychological wellbeing as well.

We are still learning about the COVID-19 virus. While we know a lot more about the virus now than we did a year ago, we also know there questions that remain to be answered. Information published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells us that COVID-19 is [spread](#) mainly through exposure to respiratory droplets when a person is in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Sometimes the droplets or particles may linger in the air for minutes to hours and spread COVID-19 by airborne transmission. This is why it recommends avoiding crowds and indoor spaces that don't have fresh air from outdoors. However, it is no longer thought to be commonly spread from touching surfaces.¹

(Please turn over for the Guidelines)

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
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The Stoneham Memorial Church had adopted the following guidelines in an effort to address the values of meeting together and taking precautions to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. The CDC has information on how COVID-19 is [spread](#) and how to [protect](#) yourself and others.² This serves as the main source for these guidelines. These steps should continue to be followed even after you have received a COVID-19 vaccine. In addition to the steps listed below that you can take, the church is requesting reservations to ensure there is room to stay 6 feet apart, has modified the collection of tithes and offerings, and cleans high-touch areas to enhance safety.

In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction is, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. We ask you to please be considerate and follow these guidelines.



Wear a snug-fitting mask that covers your mouth and nose.

We know that a person can spread the COVID-19 virus even if they do not feel ill. Wearing a mask is recommended to reduce spreading the virus while meeting together.



Stay 6 feet apart (about two arm lengths)

Keep a distance of 6 feet between yourself and people who don't live in your household. Masks should be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially around people who don't live with you.



Join us online when you:

1. Feel ill – If you are not feeling well and have symptoms suggestive of an infection, staying home is good advice.
2. Have recently been around someone who is known to have or is suspected of having COVID-19, or have recently traveled – If you get infected with the COVID-19 virus, it generally takes up to 5 days for the virus to multiply to the point where it can be detected on a typical test, and up to 10-14 days for one to have symptoms or feel ill. People who are infected can transmit the virus to others even if they feel well. Travel could potentially increase one's exposure to COVID -19.
3. Have been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by your doctor or a local public health official.³

We look forward to greeting you in person when you know you are not infectious.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

³ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-places-of-worship#key-documents-for-reopening->