



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Safer Faith-Based Gatherings and Worship Services

Updated March 29, 2021

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the vulnerable, the safest options continue to be virtual or outdoor services.

For those meeting indoors, please follow these guidelines.

- 1) Everyone 65 years of age or older **should be fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 prior to attending in-person worship services (full vaccination is considered 2 weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine).
- 2) Anyone 16 or older with high-risk medical conditions **should be fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 prior to attending in-person worship services (2 weeks after completing vaccination). For a list of high-risk medical conditions, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>
- 3) MSDH recommends that everyone 16 and older be vaccinated against COVID-19, even if the person had COVID-19 in the past.
- 4) Indoor safety guidance:
 - a. All congregants should wear a face mask at all times during in-person services.
 - b. All congregants should maintain 6 feet of separation from persons outside of their household. Household members may sit together.
 - c. Congregants should not gather in close groups while entering or exiting the building.
 - d. Congregants should use hand sanitizer prior to or upon entry of the building.
 - e. Singing is a high-risk activity. It is preferable to not have choirs – but if choirs are performing, they should be small in number, wear masks, and be separated by 6 feet.
 - f. Those in classroom settings should maintain 6 feet of separation and wear a mask at all times.
 - g. As appropriate, alternatives to shared cups for communion should be pursued.
 - h. The use of hymn books or prayer books is acceptable so long as congregants practice proper hand hygiene upon entering.
- 5) Additional procedures to protect congregants are encouraged based on local congregation leadership decisions.