

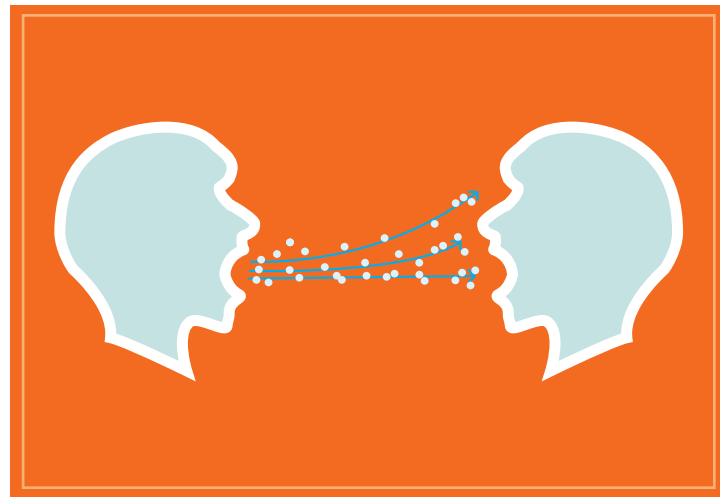
COVID-19

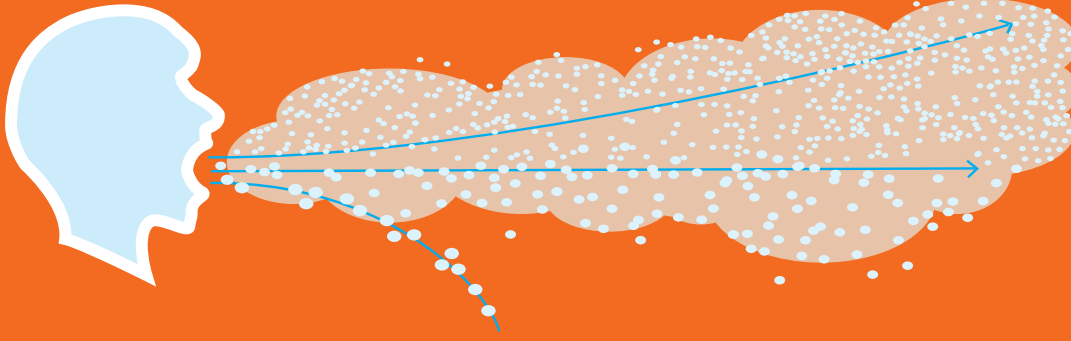
Important Information for Clergy and Musicians

Churches across the world are re-opening for public worship. Members of the clergy and church staff are looking for ways to keep people safe. By now, the public is well-educated on the importance of social distancing and good hygiene. Congregations may be less aware of the health risks associated with singing and speaking in groups.

Research on COVID-19 is on-going. To date, reliable data seems to suggest:

- Droplets produced by speaking and singing can carry **high viral loads** of COVID-19.
- Droplets carrying the virus may be produced by **asymptomatic carriers** of the virus.
- There have been numerous **superspreading events** associated with singing and church gatherings.
- Singing and loud speaking can fill a room with **clouds of particles**.
- Smaller speech droplets can **linger in the air** for extended periods of time.
- The number of droplets emitted by speech or singing **increases with volume**.
- A single minute of **loud speaking** by a carrier is likely to generate at least 1,000 virus-containing droplets.
- **Recirculated air** can increase disease transmission rates.
- There is **no existing barrier** method (mask, etc.) that is considered safe for singing.
- In essence, choral singing and congregational singing are **unsafe** during a respiratory pandemic.
- Respiratory pathogens carried by droplets may enter the body through the **mouth, nose, and eyes**.





In addition to standard social distancing and maintenance protocols, churches would be wise to adopt the following safety measures:

- All worship participants should wear **face coverings** to reduce droplet emissions.
- In the vast majority of worship spaces, there should be **no choral singing**.
- In all worship spaces, there should be **no congregational singing**.
- Corporate prayers should be **recited quietly** behind masks.
- **Readers and preachers** should wear masks.
- Any singing should be done by a **soloist** and from a distance, with a mask, and with open doors or windows. Singing should be minimal.
- **Woodwinds and brass** instruments should be avoided until more is known about their potential to spread the virus.
- **Readings and prayers** should be shortened whenever possible.
- **Preaching** should be done from a distance; **sermons/homilies** should be brief.
- **Eucharistic elements** should remain covered during consecratory prayers.
- Overall **length of worship** should be shortened. 40-45 minutes would be preferable to an hour.
- **Doors and windows** should be left open throughout the liturgy. Facility managers and HVAC professionals should determine how best to direct aerosolized particles upward and out of the building.

Sources

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