

Group and Gathering Guidelines

Groups and gatherings are a vital part of our church life and we have greatly missed gathering in person. As our state continues to reopen, we want to offer some guidelines to help you navigate the changes ahead.

We recognize that some of you may be nervous about meeting at all—and that’s okay, you don’t have to meet. As leaders, we encourage you to check in with individuals one-on-one to gauge their level of comfortability with in-person meetings so that you can best serve your group. If more than half of your group members prefer to meet online, consider doing so.

If you lead kids or students, all protection policies still apply. If you need additional guidance, please contact a church staff member.

As you know, guidelines surrounding COVID-19 change often, and we will keep you updated as these change. We recommend staying up to date on the [CDC Guidelines for Prevention](#) and [State of Illinois mandates](#).

Guidelines for Gathering

Virtual Option: Not everyone will feel comfortable attending in person at first. Consider setting up a computer in your meeting area so people can join in via videoconference.

Group Size: In-person gatherings must be 50 people or less. If your group has more than 50 people that choose to meet in person, divide and meet in different places or at different times.

Illness: Members should stay home if they or anyone in their household is sick. It is a good practice to take your temperature before meeting. If you have a reading of 100.4 or higher, please stay home.

High Risk Individuals: High risk individuals (65+, underlying health conditions, immunocompromised, etc.) are encouraged to continue meeting virtually. Take the make-up of your group into consideration if and when you offer an in-person option.

Location: Select a gathering place where you can safely distance (at minimum 6 feet apart). Meeting outside is encouraged when possible.

Masks: Please wear a mask, especially in the time people are arriving and socializing. Once group members are safely distanced, masks may be removed at the discretion of the leader and participants.

Greetings: As much as some will miss hugging or shaking hands with other people, for now it is wise to avoid physical contact.

Food: We love sharing a meal during gatherings, but during this season we are recommending there is no community food (i.e. self serve food, coffee stations). Providing individually packaged food and beverages is a good practice if you want to provide food for your gathering.

Cleaning: The host should be prepared to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched both before and after group (Door handles, chairs, restrooms, etc.).

Worship: The CDC has identified singing at gatherings to be a high risk activity. If you have worship as part of your gathering, participants should either wear masks or double the length of social distancing (12 feet or greater).