



## MORAVIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, SOUTHERN PROVINCE

Provincial Elders' Conference

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June 17, 2020

**To: Pastors, Fellowship Coordinators, Church Boards**  
**From: Provincial Elders' Conference**  
**Re: UPDATE Health and Safety Precautions for Church Offices and Gatherings**

The Provincial Elders' Conference continues to monitor developments related to COVID-19 as North Carolina is under Phase 2 of the Governor's reopening plan, and as other states where we have congregations are in various stages of reopening.

State reopening plans are based on criteria and monitoring certain trends the White House communicated April 16 in "[Guidelines: Opening America Again.](#)"

As reported by the NC Department of Health and Human Services, and through various media outlets, in North Carolina, these **key trends have not been moving in a good direction** since around Memorial Day.

A "snapshot" from Wednesday, June 10 is provided below. The [NC Dept. of Health and Human Services Dashboard](#) reports significant increases in daily cases, daily hospitalizations, and deaths related to COVID-19.

While the NC [Governors' Order No. 141](#), allows the reopening of "businesses," including church offices, the [guidelines for Phase 2](#) also state:

"All businesses in North Carolina are strongly encouraged to continue directing employees to telework, if possible. Additionally, non-essential travel and in-person meetings should be avoided."

Previously (May 13) we provided guidelines about church staff returning to church offices and for welcoming visitors to church offices.

**The Provincial Elders' Conference strongly encourages the following:**

*Note: Items in bold are new or revised.*

*Remaining items are repeated from prior communication.*

- **Church offices (including Provincial Offices) should not be open to visitors until June 30, or until North Carolina enters Phase 3 of the reopening.**
- Church staff should continue to work from home as much as possible. Other than paid staff or volunteer staff with specific essential responsibilities, members should not be inside church facilities.
- **If Church staff work in the church facilities, the [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#) should be followed.**
- Church meetings (boards, committees, Bible studies, fellowships, etc.) continue to utilize technology to meet remotely.

- Those over the age of 65, those with underlying health conditions, and those with weakened immune systems remain at home as much as possible.
- **When leaving home, remember the [Three Ws](#):**
  - **Wear a cloth face covering**
  - **Wait six feet apart. Avoid close contact.**
  - **Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.**
- Indoor worship services, or gatherings of worship leaders to facilitate various on-line worship alternatives or other program offerings be limited to no more than 10 people. Everyone involved should observe the “*Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing and Reduce Transmission.*” (See below).
- Outdoor worship services, or other outdoor gatherings be held only after necessary planning, preparation and communication to ensure everyone’s health and safety. Everyone involved should observe the “*Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing and Reduce Transmission.*” (See below).
- Congregational leaders should use the time before June 30 to develop a comprehensive plan about how to safely resume large group gatherings for worship and other activities. Please refer to our **April 27 and May 28 memos** for suggestions and resources.

### **June 10 “Snapshot” of Trends**

From the Winston-Salem Journal the following report:

- A record number of people are hospitalized for COVID-19 in Forsyth County
- Forsyth’s rate of infection & hospitalizations have risen steadily since mid-May (we entered Phase 2 on May 22)
- Forsyth’s infection rate per 100,000 people is higher than the state’s, and has been so since May 18, and is significantly higher than Guilford County’s
- 90 new cases in Forsyth County yesterday (June 9).

And in other reports:

- NC is one of 9 states where hospitalizations have increased since the Memorial Day holiday (*Washington Post*)
- NC is one of 14 states that have experienced their highest 7-day average of new cases (*The Guardian*)
- *Healthline* and the *New York Times* also show NC as among the states with increasing case count and rate – more than can be accounted for just by increased testing

## **From the NC Governor's Executive Order No. 141**

### **Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing and Reduce Transmission.**

When people are outside their homes, they are strongly encouraged to take the following Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing and Reduce Transmission:

1. Maintain at least six (6) feet social distancing from other individuals, with the exception of family or household members.
2. Wear a cloth Face Covering when leaving home and wear it inside all public settings such as grocery stores, pharmacies, or other retail or public-serving businesses. A Face Covering should also be worn outdoors when you cannot maintain at least six (6) feet distancing from other people with the exception of family or household members. These coverings function to protect other people more than the wearer.
3. Carry hand sanitizer with you when leaving home, and use it frequently.
4. Wash hands using soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds as frequently as possible.
5. Regularly clean high-touch surfaces such as steering wheels, wallets, and phones.
6. Stay at home if sick.