



**PASTORS & STATE STAFF  
NCCOGOP COVID-19 Directives  
May 21, 2020**

Please receive my appreciation for all of you who have participated in the 2 Chronicles Prayer initiative, as we sought the Lord for the healing in our world. Moreover, thank you to all who have done your best to follow the National, State and Local guidelines regarding COVID-19.

By now, most if not all of you have heard and/or read the Governor's Executive Order #141-Phase #2, which will go into effect at 5:00pm on Friday, May 22, 2020 and remain until June 26, 2020, unless changed or cancelled. You also may have seen the FAQ document, and are aware that Section 4 of the FAQ document allows exemptions for churches and houses of worship as it relates to Executive Order #141. The FAQ states:

"Worship, religious, and spiritual gatherings, funeral ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, and other activities constituting the exercise of First Amendment rights are exempt from all the requirements of this Executive Order and Executive Order Nos. 121 and 138, notwithstanding any other provision of this Executive Order or of Executive Order Nos. 121 and 138."

**What does Executive Order #141 mean for places of worship?**

The mass gathering limit and other requirements of this Executive Order do not apply to worship, religious, and spiritual gatherings, funeral ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, and other activities constituting the exercise of First Amendment rights.

While this decision seems straight forward, the challenge we all face is that there is not a one size fits all solution. North Carolina is dynamic with churches in urban, suburban, rural, inner city, town, and mountain communities. Moreover, within the churches there exists a dynamic people with varying feelings about what to do now. In addition, there are cultural and ethnic communities impacted at a greater degree than others around the state, nation and the world.

According to the law, we have the right to open our houses of worship. However, the answer is not that simple. The question is not **Can We** open (by law), the question is **Should We** open. Are we ready to open our churches? Have we properly prepared? Do we have PPEs in place? Are sanitation plans in place? Is our team ready to serve? Is it the best thing for our congregation?

**1 Cor 10:23-24, 31b, 33b, says,**

**23** "Everything is permissible,"but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible," but not everything builds up. **24** No one is to seek his own good, but the good of the other person. **31** So,..., whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. **33b**, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.

Is opening your church door the best thing to do right now? This is a decision that you and your Board, Committee, Leadership and Congregation must make. For many of you the answer will be no, it's not time yet, and for others it will be yes.

1. Make sure to pray about it. Ask yourself these questions and take them to the Lord in prayer; a) Will this decision bring glory to God? b) Do I have peace about the decision? c) Do other spiritual leaders stand in agreement? d) Is this decision a benefit for the greater good?
2. Consult your local church governance board or committee for a recommendation to have said service. Note: to miss this step is to set yourself up for personal liability.
3. If your board or committee agrees to proceed, you might consider a soft survey of your congregation to insure the best possible outcome.
4. Make sure that you have properly prepared for the service. We have included three resources to assist you with this directive. Make sure you review the information and have those that are leading with you also review the information. This will help you make an informed decision.
5. Confirm you are incorporated as a Local Church Congregation.
6. Contact your insurance carrier (if you haven't done so) to assure that you have appropriate and adequate insurance protection.
7. Pastors should inform the Regional Bishop regarding the churches plan in light of this updated directive, i.e., Drive-in Church and/or Outside Church Services, or church in the sanctuary. This can be done by sending an email.

**Special note:** When making your decision you should also give consideration regarding the age, health conditions and ability of your parishioners to attend.

- Whether you choose to hold Drive up/Cowboy, or Outside Church (standing or with chairs) or to open the sanctuary, I strongly recommend churches who have been providing a virtual worship experience continue to do so. Care for the new people (the Harvest) you have reached and steward the gift God has placed in your hands.
- You should respect decisions of all church members; those who choose to participate onsite, and those who have decided to remain home and follow you via technology.

#### Additional Recommendations:

1. If operating Drive up/Cowboy, or outside church shorten the service, keep the church locked, and bathrooms unavailable.
2. Maintain the proper distance in accordance with the recommended guidelines.
3. Discourage personal contact of your parishioners.
4. Take any and all other essential precautions to safeguard the health of those attending.
5. Check with your local authorities to make sure that you are in compliance.

If your church decides to open the doors of the church, I strongly urge you to follow the Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing to reduce chances for transmission of the virus. I am requesting all North Carolina Church of God of Prophecy local congregations to follow the Three Ws to reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19:

- Wear a cloth face covering
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer; and
- Wait six feet apart from other people to keep your distance.

Let us continue to be a part of the solution in the battle against the spread of Coronavirus.

The Lord Bless and keep you is my incessant prayer.



Bishop Jeffery A. Davis  
NC Church of God of Prophecy  
Presiding Presbyter  
**"On Earth As It is In Heaven"**

#### **RESOURCES:**

4 Components to Reopening Church after COVID-19

<https://churchtechtoday.com/2020/05/08/4-components-to-reopening-church-after-covid-19/>

Coronavirus – Before We Gather

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/general-health-and-injury-prevention/coronavirus/before-we-gather/>

8 Things to Consider as You Beginning Planning to Reopen Your Church

<https://smartchurchmanagement.com/reopen-church/>

The recommendations and instructions provided in this memorandum should not be construed as State Office/State Bishop approval and/or an endorsement. The instructions are only intended to provide direction for "doing things the right way" should your local church decide to take the allowance made by National, State and Local authorities.