

Mississippi Southern First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Church Of God In Christ

Church Protocol for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Introduction:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes flu-like symptoms such as a cough, fever (>100.4), difficulty breathing, headaches, body aches, and/or loss of taste or smell. However, it is important to know that some people who are infected do not have symptoms.

It spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough, sneeze, or talk while in close proximity. It also spreads when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Vulnerable people (like those with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and immune diseases) are at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 illness.

Faith-based Organizations (churches) are essential components in addressing every community problem. Because of the rapid spread of COVID-19, churches can help by promoting community mitigation. Community mitigation is simply a set of actions used to help slow the spread of respiratory virus infections.

You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently with soap and water or 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizer for 20 seconds, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (6 feet) with people; especially if they are known to be sick.

Procedures:

The following procedures are adapted from recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Mississippi State Department of Health based on the tenets of Planning, Preparing, and Responding.

1. Planning:

- Identify a contact-person (and a backup person) within your congregation to be the person responsible for keeping leadership up-to-date with information, and to serve as the liaison between the local church and the Jurisdiction.
- Have a COVID-19 Hotline contact number for the Mississippi State Department of Health (**877-978-6453**)
- Have a list of local COVID-19 testing sites. (Can be downloaded at https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,21912,420,874.html)
- Have a list of local emergency services (**See Appendix A**):
 - i. Local hospital emergency room
 - ii. ambulance service

2. Preparing:

- **If no known cases within the local congregation/community:**
 - i. Reinforce everyday preventive measures (washing hands and keeping hands away from face)
 - ii. Practice social distancing (maintaining a distance of 6 feet between persons; 13 feet distance if jogging or running for exercise)
 - iii. Keep areas clean and disinfected
 - iv. If sick, stay at home

- v. Educate and re-educate on the importance of protecting higher-risk/vulnerable groups [i.e. elderly (>65); chronic lung disease; pregnant; heart conditions; diabetes; immunocompromised (cancer treatment, HIV+, transplant recipients, kidney disease on dialysis, liver disease, prolonged use of corticosteroids); obese; and smokers.]
- vi. Use coverings for nose and mouth, and wear protective gloves when away from home.
- vii. Avoid social gatherings, even with family members who do not live with you.
- viii. Avoid frequent visits to higher-risk/vulnerable groups unless delivering supplies.
- ix. Avoid frequent trips to the grocery store, restaurants, banks, and gas stations. Only visit doctor's office if absolutely necessary.

3. Responding:

- **If someone is sick or has symptoms within the local church/community:**
 - i. Using standard precautions (mask and gloves), isolate the person from others and have them return home for isolation. Exercise all precautions listed under Section 2 (Preparing).
 - ii. If having COVID-19 symptoms, call primary care provider or hotline for the Mississippi State Department of Health - (**877-978-6453**) for further instructions
- **If known case within the local church/community:**
 - i. **No one with known infection should be at church until they have been medically cleared based on CDC guidelines; such a person is considered non-compliant. It is a criminal act for an infected person to knowingly expose others.**
 - ii. Using standard precautions (mask and gloves), isolate the person from others and have them return home for isolation if stable. If person is not stable, contact your local emergency service for transport, but still isolate them from others.
 - iii. Have local church's contact person make a list of people and places the infected person made contact with, or was within 6 feet of while in attendance. This will be needful for the Health Department if the infected person cannot speak, or becomes unconscious.
 - iv. Church's local contact person (or designee) should contact the Mississippi State Department of Health Hotline (**877-978-6453**) and provide infected person's name and county of residence, as well as county of church. Either a healthcare worker or someone from the Local Emergency Management Team will call the church's contact person back. The church's local contact person, in consultation with their Pastor, should submit to their District Superintendent and the Jurisdictional COVID-19 Task Force (submit to email: info@weareonecogic.com or call 888-647-3614) the age, gender, and race of the infected person. No names should be submitted to the District or Jurisdictional COVID-19 Task Force without written proof that permission was granted (See Appendix A).
 - v. The local Pastor (or designee of church leadership) should alert the congregation and any visitors of any potential exposure without divulging the infected person's confidentiality. Though churches are not technically bound by HIPAA laws unless operating counseling centers or hospitals, it is good practice to operate in a confidential manner. A member of the Health Department will contact the infected person and ask about potential contacts, and will notify those individuals of the potential contact and next procedure.
 - vi. Cancel any further services in the facility the infected person was in until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
 - vii. Modify in-person gatherings by using alternative means like Facebook, Zoom, Skype, etc.
 - viii. Pay special attention to the needs of the higher-risk and vulnerable groups.

Appendix A.
Release of Information Form

Date: _____

Person's Name: _____

Person's Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Local Healthcare Provider: _____

Local Healthcare Provider's Phone #: _____

Age: _____

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

Race: _____

County: _____

Important Numbers:

Mississippi State Department of Health COVID-19 Hotline: **877-978-6453**

MS Southern First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction: info@weareonecogic.com or **888-647-3614**

Local Ambulance Service: _____

Local Emergency Room: _____

I authorize the release of information including my name, age, gender, and diagnosis.

This information may be released to:

Local Church Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(if different) _____

Phone number: _____

District Superintendent (or his designee)

MS Southern First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction

This Release of Information will remain in effect until terminated by me in writing.

Present Symptoms: _____

Medical History: _____

Plan: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

COVID-19 Monitoring

Name: _____ Date of Exp: _____

*Temp > 100.4, New Onset Cough, abdominal pain, diarrhea or flu like symptoms
(myalgias, arthralgia, unexplained fatigue)*

DAY	TEMP	New COUGH		New ABN PAIN		New DIARRHEA		New FLU Syx	
¹ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
² AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
³ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
⁴ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
⁵ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
⁶ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
⁷ AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

If positive for any symptoms, call your Healthcare Provider or contact the Mississippi State Department of Health Hotline at 877-978-6453 for further instructions.

DAY	TEMP	New COUGH		New ABN PAIN		New DIARRHEA		New FLU Syx	
8 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
9 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
10 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
11 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
12 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
13 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
14 AM		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	PM	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

If positive for any symptoms, call your Healthcare Provider or contact the Mississippi State Department of Health Hotline at 877-978-6453 for further instructions.