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Sent: Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:00 PM
To: Karen Deniger
Subject: Holding our Plans Loosely: Returning to Church 2.0



**WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES**
 COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

Holding Our Plans Loosely: Returning to Church 2.0

Today, the Wisconsin Council of Churches released "Returning to Church 2.0," a thorough revision and rewrite of our best recommendations to churches regarding when and how to resume ministry in physical place in ways that are faithful, ethical and grounded in good science. Below you'll find the Executive Summary of the 15 page guidance. Scroll to the bottom to download the complete PDF, view the hour-long webinar, or access the powerpoint slides from the webinar.

You'll find regular updates and our most current recommendations on our [Returning to Church page](#).

Executive Summary

1. We recommend prioritizing life and health of neighbor in all ministry decisions as a Gospel witness.
2. Concurrent values include creativity (holy experiments), urgency and care in meeting human needs, and attending to diversity and accessibility.
3. Norms of these recommendations include taking seriously the church's role as community leader, and trusting in the resilience of the church.
4. Churches should take a two-step approach to gathering, tracking the following data:

FIRST, watch vaccination rates. When more than 50% of the population has been vaccinated, we can expect that it will begin to have an impact on viral transmission (although "herd immunity" will not likely be fully reached until vaccination rates exceed 75%).

THEN, track COVID cases per 100,000 population and the rates of positive tests. Our safer threshold for gathering is when cases are less than 5 per 100,000 population and positive tests less than 10%. Safest would be even lower.

UNSAFE TO GATHER	MAKE IT SAFER	SAFEST
Vaccination rates <50%	Vaccination rates 50-70+%	Vaccination rates 70-85+%
Viral Transmission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases >10/100K • Positive Tests >10% 	Viral Transmission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases 5-10/100K • Positive Tests <10% 	Viral Transmission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases <1/100K • Positive Tests <5%

5. Some of the most important things churches can be doing until it is safer to gather in person is to encourage people to be vaccinated, debunk myths about vaccinations and vaccines, and encourage continued protective behaviors.
6. When you begin gathering in physical space again, plan on event modifications, mitigations and protective behaviors until COVID in

the community is very low. Expect these modifications to continue for a significant amount of time, perhaps this calendar year or longer. See full text of this document for information about phased plans, mitigating especially risky behavior, and healthy decision-making.

UNSAFE	MAKE IT SAFER	SAFEST
All at once Unmasked No distancing Full capacity Assembly singing Eating together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Face masks mandatory♦ Physical distancing♦ Low-touch environment♦ Outdoors or increased air exchange♦ Shortened time of service♦ Singing by worship leaders only♦ Focus on sanitizing high-touch surfaces♦ Sign-in / attendance list	<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ All of the “make it safer” plus no or minimized singing♦ Hybrid, phased plan♦ Wait 1 month+ between phases♦ Fallback plan for outbreaks♦ Communication plan♦ Team responsibility

[Click Here to Download the Complete PDF](#)

[Click here to view the webinar ‘Holding our Plans Loosely: Returning to Church 2.0’ on YouTube](#)

[Click here to view the powerpoint slides from the webinar](#)

*Have you appreciated or benefited from our crisis response ministry with respect to the coronavirus?
Please share a [word of testimony](#), or [make a donation](#) to sustain this work,
which is helping clergy and churches here in Wisconsin, and across the nation*

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