

## REGIONAL UPDATE

May 7, 2020



### **A Collection of Resources About Re-Opening Our Churches for In-Person Worship**

Dear Clergy Friends,

Bishop Melvin has asked me to compile resources and thoughts about our churches making the move (when wise) to worship together in person. What we will be doing post-COVID-19 will not be the same as what we were doing pre-COVID-19. We are changed by this, and this has changed our society.

Compiling resources is an effort to get at the practical issues we must consider as we prayerfully make our plans. Having a plan is essential. Our congregation members understanding the plan is essential, too. Such plans cannot be made in a vacuum. So I share some resources with you. I recognize that what will be wise in a setting like mine (Mecklenburg County, the area with the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the state), might not be required in a setting like yours. In any case, the Governor has indeed given us a framework and following it cautiously has the potential to minimize the spread of infection as we get back to yet another new normal.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list, but it is a beginning. I want to call your attention, especially to the documents from our Governor, the CDC, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC). Recognize that, although the WCC is in a different context than ours and responding to a different state plan than ours, these guidelines are carefully considered and measured in ways that might surprise you.

Within these resources are questions that are especially difficult for me to consider as a pastor of a Disciples of Christ congregation around communion and singing. If masks must be worn in the church at first, how does one remove the mask to take communion without becoming another possible point of infection (thereby undermining the whole point of wearing a mask)? If singing causes the virus to become aerosol particles, how can we ensure the safety of any of our people in rooms with singing (congregational or small ensembles)? Those two questions alone make me lean toward continuing to meet exclusively online into the near future with the congregation I serve.

Peace,

Jolin Wilks McElroy, Pastor  
First Christian Church, Charlotte, NC

**A Word from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination:**

<https://disciples.org/from-the-gmp/general-minister-and-president-on-re-opening-congregations/>

Note especially the video from our General Minister and President on the issue of re-opening churches

**Our NC context:**

<https://governor.nc.gov/news/governor-extends-stay-home-order-through-may-8-plans-three-phase-lifting-restrictions-based>

**CDC Guidelines:**

<https://context-cdn.washingtonpost.com/notes/prod/default/documents/5c0a7b41-2997-4a9a-ad3a-7d2ff788fc8e/note/8c6cbafb-bc04-4d78-9f15-cf27fc7c4b4d.#page=1>. Communities of faith begin on p. 7.

**A Thorough Consideration of Implications from the Wisconsin Council of Churches**

<https://www.wichurches.org/2020/04/23/returning-to-church/>

**Western NC Conference UMC**

<https://www.wnccumc.org/newsdetail/considerations-before-reopening-13626851>

**Input re: church life with COVID-19 from many sources:**

<https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/covid-19/churches-could-be-deadliest-places-covid-19-pandemic>

<https://saranavefisher.com/2020/04/25/small-churches-and-re-opening-our-doors/?fbclid=IwAR28-m2VGuUIYAIxMnNoSZeqQ7Pdrnvo8XBgslrJepp2XsFSOY5LF3rVUOc>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uAKQXagwms&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1\\_E6GfxWK2pOP6sC\\_BWJBqqUZyBYORBB074kOxS3p6kN8wLITGZrIEe84](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uAKQXagwms&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1_E6GfxWK2pOP6sC_BWJBqqUZyBYORBB074kOxS3p6kN8wLITGZrIEe84)

[https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-03-29/coronavirus-choir-outbreak?fbclid=IwAR2Ipis8Ir0vlo87\\_jLVh11NjKUyF1dYAOJrdN3y-qE9S6t1RrFCK899X7A](https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-03-29/coronavirus-choir-outbreak?fbclid=IwAR2Ipis8Ir0vlo87_jLVh11NjKUyF1dYAOJrdN3y-qE9S6t1RrFCK899X7A)

**Link provided by the Northern California/Nevada region**

<https://thomrainer.com/2020/03/your-church-is-now-a-blank-slate/>

**Sanitizing Congregational Spaces by the Southwest region**

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/508590e6e4b02e0cbd20fcfc/t/5e78e76bc293951a83a2e8ed/1584981869137/Covid-19+Sanitizing+Congregational+Spaces.pdf>

**FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES RESOURCE PAGE**

May 12 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Reentering Worship Roundtable, *Led by CBFNC staff*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82116695898?status=success>

May 19 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Leadership Needed Beyond COVID-19 Crisis, *Led by Eddie Hammett*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87115189095?status=success>

May 26 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Rethinking Hospitality/Facilities Roundtable, *Led by CBFNC staff*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84962956316?status=success>

June 2 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Creating Next Steps to Sustain & Deepen, *Led by Eddie Hammett*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83332414925?status=success>

June 9 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

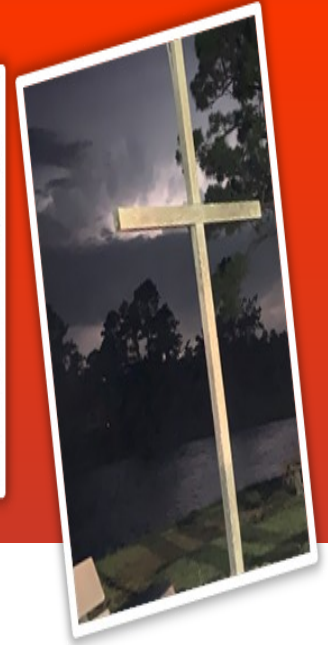
Reimagining Activities & Ministries Roundtable, *Led by CBFNC staff*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84800559801?status=success>



# Disciples Men of North Carolina

(Christian Men's Fellowship)



Dear North Carolina Disciples Men,

Over one month ago, I came to you with concern. The COVID-19 pandemic was just beginning, and we all shared fears over the unknown. It seems the season of unknowing continues and we simply do not know when we will begin to find some degree of normalcy. We are concerned about health, transmission, and the lasting impact of this pandemic. A few weeks ago, I shared these concerns with the North Carolina Disciples Men Executive Committee. As we continue to follow the best practices provided by the CDC and other healthcare professionals, it is clear that our retreat scheduled in June at Camp Caroline is not feasible at this time. Cancelling is a hard decision and it is done so with a very heavy heart. But our overall health and well-being is so important at this time. We must wait to try to find our new normal. Certainly, we must pray that God will grant us wisdom as to what this new normal will be. Right now, we want a plan and a firm date when we can begin to interact with one another. Patience and understanding must continue to be our focal points.

Scripture tells us of the importance of making room for lament. So, I would encourage us to do so. Grieve the situation and grieve the missed opportunities. Grieve with those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and pray for those battling on the front lines. Grieve for those who are struggling with the economic impact this is having on their households. And finally grieve because we are all being directly impacted by the trauma of this event. As we grieve, we make space for the God of the Resurrection. God will continue to do new things! We will look for the light and see where God leads us! May we all pray that God will help inspire us with the creativity to look for new ways to foster community.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions. I would especially ask for you to contact me if you would like to help the North Carolina Disciples Men discern what God is calling for our future. We are in need of volunteers to help lead this body. My email address is: [RevAndrewShue@gmail.com](mailto:RevAndrewShue@gmail.com).

Grace and peace,

Rev. Andrew Shue

*Rev. Andrew Shue*

Senior Minister, First Christian Church of Greenville, NC

President, North Carolina Disciples Men

