

April 30th, 2020

Dear Faith Leaders,

Let me start by saying how EXTREMELY grateful I am for each of you. Especially over the last 6 weeks. I have loved watching how your congregations have come together even when apart to worship, celebrate, mourn, and support each other. Whether it be through videos, phone calls, meals, grocery shopping, drive in services, live streamed lessons for all members of the family, and so much more. You have all shown the love of Christ to your congregations but also to the community as a whole.

I also want to give a personal thank you. I have received many calls, text, emails, and social media messages encouraging me. I have been routinely reminded that God knows our hearts and minds. When I would begin to find myself getting frustrated, discouraged, and even gloomy, I am an extrovert so this has been very challenging, I would nearly instantly receive a message with a word of encouragement, a funny video, or a song. That has meant more to me than you will ever know and has helped carry me through this strange time.

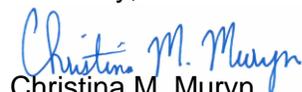
When I reached out to you in March I was prepared for a significant amount of push back. I knew that requesting changes to something so sacred to each of us could cause a lot of conflict. As I weighed making the request I thought of my own church family. The individuals I have grown up with, both young and old that would be at risk. I knew that if I did not make the request and we saw the significant spread that was possible I would be disappointed in myself for not asking. As your Mayor, as a leader, and as a person of faith I needed to trust that by making the request of you all, you would understand the importance and support me in this decision. I knew that if you were not willing to make this difficult decision our community would have a much more difficult road ahead. You all stepped up to the plate and with grace and resolve you backed me up. Even if that had not been how you thought about it.

I am pleased with the dedication to the safety measures and the outcomes it has generated. We still have a long road ahead and I need you to continue to enforce the importance of the safety measures. With that, I have spoken with Hancock Public Health Commissioner Karim Baroudi and we have determined we are comfortable with churches resuming activities as of May 17th with the strong ask that the included recommended safety measures be implemented.

I am once again relying on you to guide your congregation through this challenging time. I believe re-opening is going to be more challenging than the closing. Each day I see more and more conflicting opinions, even within our church families, which may cause some challenges for your congregation. If there is anything I can do to help please do not hesitate to reach out.

If a church has specific questions, please feel free to contact Hancock Public Health COVID-19 Call Center at 419-424-7105 or email mayor@findlayohio.com. Additional resources are available at cdc.gov/coronavirus or coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,



Christina M. Muryn
Mayor

RECOMMENDED SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

- 1) Strongly encourage the at-risk population to watch or participate in the service remotely.
 - a. At-risk population are those who are 65 or older and/or those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system. ([Link](#) to at-risk populations)
- 2) Limit attendance to 50% of fire code capacity
- 3) Equip ushers and greeters with gloves and masks.
 - a. Discourage hand shaking, etc. (Have ushers open doors to limit the numbers of people touching handles.)
- 4) Keep childcare and Sunday School closed
- 5) Have hand sanitizer at doors for communal use
- 6) Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces before and after service
- 7) No communal food. (Coffee, donuts, etc.)
- 8) Request all attendees wear face coverings
- 9) Request all attendees check temperatures and not attend if showing any symptoms of illness (Fever, shortness of breath, cough, or fatigue) Post signage on doors.
- 10) Encourage social distancing (6ft + of separation.)
- 11) Encourage families to stay together. (i.e try to limit kids gathering with other children)
- 12) Cover drinking fountains
- 13) Post signage about good hygiene in bathrooms ([Poster](#))
- 14) Make sure bathrooms are properly stocked with soap and paper towels for proper handwashing