

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland:

TO BE HANDLED BY THE LOCAL CHURCH BOARDS BEFORE THEY START TO HAVE MEETINGS AND EVENTS FROM 1ST OF JUNE 2020 ONWARDS

Guidelines for Reopening Your Church

A) When to reopen

1. Do we have a compelling reason to return to gathering instead of what we are doing now?
2. What do my state officials and local authorities recommend right now?
3. How do the people in my church feel about gathering publicly?
4. How do the people in my community feel about gathering publicly right now?
5. Do we have a real sense of how volunteers will participate?
6. Do we have a real sense of how parents and children will participate?
7. What must stay the same when we reopen?
8. What must change for us to reopen?
9. Do we have a communications or PR plan in place?
10. What is the wise thing to do?

B) How to reopen



1. Take guidance from local officials

2. Survey your congregation

- When is the soonest you would consider coming back to the church building?
- What would you want to see happen before you would comfortably return to church?
- If we opened next week, would you volunteer in your same spot?
- If we opened next week, would you send your children to our children's programming?
- What do you miss most about church?

3. Make it a church board decision

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C) Communication

Email: reopening date, message of encouragement to the vulnerable, criteria the leadership are using to make the decision to reopen, precautions the church is taking to keep people safe, who to contact for additional questions.

Website: reopening message, plans, guidelines.

Videos: what to expect when we get together again.

Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Signage:

- "Please maintain 6-feet of space"
- "Please sit one row apart"
- 6-feet distance markers
- Maximum people allowed in a room or space
- "Please wait here"
- "Please wear a facemask before entering the lobby"
- "Do not enter" for restricted areas

D) Returning to weekly services

- How will you adjust to changing limitations on the size of gatherings? What would a tiered approach specifically look like for your church?
- Are you planning to add services to allow for smaller crowds? As you add services, how does that affect volunteers and musicians?
- How will you change the "greeting time" in service? And how will you train greeters, ushers, and guest services volunteers?
- How are you preparing for volunteers who aren't comfortable serving yet?
- How will you adjust "passing the plate", communion, baptism?
- What's your plan for blending in-person and online? As you gather again, there will be a lot of people who don't feel comfortable joining in person. You might have a larger audience online than in person. What are your plans for that?

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E) Safety and cleaning

- Who is responsible for creating and rolling out safety measures?
- What changes will we make to serving refreshments and conducting communion?
- What measures do we need to take for cleaning before, during, and after services?
- Which areas in the church building need the most frequent cleaning?
- Which key team members and volunteers need to be most thoroughly trained in the new safety and cleaning policies?
- For specific areas of the building:
 - How often will you clean and disinfect the chairs, carpet, counters, and toilets?
 - Will you require (or does your government require) face masks in order to enter the front doors?
- Where will you place or distribute hygiene supplies (hand sanitizer stations, sanitizing wipes, gloves, etc.)?
- Will you restrict access to water fountains?
- Which doors will be off-limits and which doors will be high touch (requiring more frequent wipe downs)?
- Will you restrict access to certain small, nonessential areas or hallways?
- What is your building capacity and how many people can your church safely accommodate to meet social distancing requirements?

E) In addition

The administrative board of the SDA Church in Finland has instructed the following:

Local congregations need to take into account government guidelines, in particular concerning gatherings of a maximum of 50 people, safety distances (2 m recommended), hygiene guidelines and guidelines for those over 70 years of age (it is still recommended that physical contact be avoided as far as possible. The government also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the risk group's discretionary code of conduct). So far, neither communions nor joint meals are held in the local churches.

Visiting local churches in neighbouring areas are permitted from 1st June 2020, provided that the safety and hygiene regulations resulting from the state of emergency are complied with. However, visits to or from abroad are not allowed for the time being. This applies to both workers and lay people. For now, employees are not obliged to visit or attend their own congregation, but they can continue to serve online or through other means of communication. The government instructions for risk groups as well as for people living in the same household with the residents belonging to the risk groups must be observed.

For more details please visit:

https://cfresourcelibrary.s3.amazonaws.com/eBooks/Reopening/The+Senior+Pastor's+Guide+to+Reopening.pdf?inf_contact_key=008b224e3bd95a4b6ec49bd3410e85a209c74070ac2bf3cfa7869e3cfd4ff832