

# BEST PRACTICES for in-person gatherings



## Updated COVID-19 Guidance

*Revised May 20, 2021*

Bishop Holston affirms these Best Practices for in-person worship and other gatherings, compiled by a team of South Carolina United Methodist pastors and laity.

Based on current CDC guidelines, **we do not recommend any specific restrictions on participation in church activities for those who have been fully vaccinated**. All eligible persons are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as possible.

Local church leaders are expected to continue to make the best decisions for their congregations and communities, taking into account the latest CDC guidance and the circumstances of their congregations and communities.

Because of age or health conditions, not all people are able to be vaccinated. Churches are encouraged to make plans that enable safe participation for those still at risk. All members are reminded that individual circumstances differ, and all persons should respect the decisions made by others as they assume personal responsibility for health and safety during the pandemic.

We recognize that in almost every congregation there are differences of opinion about the best way to respond to COVID-19. We urge patience and understanding as we continue to seek the best ways to serve God and one another.

We offer the following considerations about ministry areas that have generated numerous questions:

## Choirs

Un-vaccinated persons may participate in choirs. However, if un-vaccinated persons participate in choirs then those churches are encouraged to take steps to limit the spread of aerosols and to distance the choir from the congregation.

## Communion

We are thankful for the gift of being able to participate in Communion. We recommend that churches that do not have 100 percent vaccinated persons attending continue the safety practices already in place, including the use of pre-packaged communion elements.

## Children

Currently, there are no vaccines available for children under the age of 12. We encourage churches to follow the [CDC guidelines that apply to this age group](#).

## Special Health Conditions

Please encourage the elderly and those with weak immune systems due to health conditions such as diabetes, cancer and immune-suppressing medications to continue to wear masks as they may not be fully protected from COVID-19 even after they are fully vaccinated.