

# changing church

TOOLKIT | THE GATHERING CHURCH

10 TOP TIPS

FOR REOPENING CHURCH



# As followers of Jesus...

We are learning to worship, pray, encourage, witness, disciple, and serve in new and creative ways that minimise the risk of spreading coronavirus. The reopening of church buildings provides opportunities and challenges to be navigated with love, wisdom and grace. The past few months have created a church without walls, releasing many into new ways of ministering, and this can continue alongside public worship in our churches.

## 1. Prayer

Spend time prayerfully reflecting on what God is saying and seek His guidance on what is right for your church and context in light of COVID-19 and considerations for the reopening of your church.

## 2. Theology

Your theological foundations will impact how and when you reopen, especially as you consider issues such as mission, pastoral care, protecting the vulnerable and providing hope.

## 3. Team

Collective decision-making allows different gifts and experiences to influence health, policy, community and ecclesiological considerations in reopening. Be clear on who gets to decide what.

## 4. Compliance

Ensure you are complying with government regulations, the best scientific and health advice available, as well as denominational guidance – and keep your insurers informed.

## 5. Pace

Reopening is likely to involve a step-by-step approach. It is a marathon rather than a sprint: pace yourself and protect your staff who have already made huge transitions.



## 7. Flexibility

Be ready to respond to new advice. This might enable more ministries to open, or impose new restrictions following an outbreak.

## 9. Online

Consideration should be given to running a blended ministry, continuing an online offering for those unable or unwilling to attend in person, while acknowledging the extra workload that will entail.

## 6. Planning

Create a realistic plan for the different phases or steps, taking into account staff, volunteers, cleaning, infection response, and the needs of the most vulnerable.

## 8. Communication

Think through how and when you share information and updates with members of your church. Keeping people informed, even if little is changing or things are unclear, will be reassuring.

## 10. Rest

Change and uncertainty is tiring. The last few months have been extremely demanding for church leaders, volunteers and so many others. Churches will need to find sustainable rhythms that create space for rest.

