



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES

- 1.** Complete and submit an online application form for the reopening of the church at least 3 days before the scheduled reopening date. A permit, which will be provided by email before the reopening, must be printed and displayed on the door of the church, during each session. All forms must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and approval will be granted, based on approved national protocols and regulations.
- 2.** Calculate the number of attendees to be allowed in the building. The measurement to be used is 36 square feet per person, using the seating space. Markers must be used on benches, and chairs must be placed no less than 6 ft. in every direction.
- 3.** Provide for each service, appropriate facilities and adequate supplies not limited to, but including hand washing facilities, running water, soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer and disinfectant. A sanitizing station must be set up close to the door, for people entering and leaving the building.
- 4.** Establish a separate room in the building, or in another location to accommodate an individual or individuals who become sick during the service (displaying any COVID-19 symptoms), until they can safely leave, to seek medical attention.
- 5.** Establish visible signs/notices encouraging members to observe the protocols and practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- 6.** Share protocols and expectations with all members before the date of reopening.



- 7.** Limit gatherings to one day per week, in the first instance. An additional day will be allowed for special liturgical services, or regular weekday services. All other weekly activities/services must be conducted remotely, at this time.
- 8.** Ensure that all persons entering the building are wearing a mask and that it is worn for the duration of the service. When addressing the gathering, a speaker may remove his mask but **MUST** observe physical distancing of at least twelve (12) feet, at all times.
- 9.** Ensure that members with underlying health conditions; children under the age of 12; pregnant and nursing women; adults over 70-years-old; individuals with disabilities and those who might not be able to wear a mask for the duration of the service, remain at home, until further notice. Church leaders over 70-years-old, required to officiate in a service, will be exempted.
- 10.** Sanitize the building, before each service. Frequently touched areas must be carefully sanitized before, during and after each service. All cleaning products must be used according to the directions on the label. All cleaners must follow guidelines from the Ministry of Health. Masks and gloves must be used by cleaners at all times.
- 11.** Ensure that transportation arrangements are in place, to ensure that all individuals leave immediately after the service. The national regulations must be used to determine the number of individuals from different homes, who can share a vehicle and the seating arrangements.
- 12.** Announce, to the hearing of all members present at each service (before, during and at the end), the hygiene, sanitation and physical distancing protocols to be followed.
- 13.** Ensure physical contact among individuals is not allowed.
- 14.** Use stationary boxes for the collection of tithes and offering, ensuring a distance of six (6) feet is maintained between those who are going to the box.



Ensure a protocol is established for handling of money. Six (6) feet physical distancing must be maintained and hands must be sanitized immediately after.

15. Ensure that physical distancing is observed where communion services are held. Individuals involved in distribution must wear gloves and must use hand sanitizers (containing at least 70% alcohol). For religions where this applies, 'sharing of the cup' is not allowed, at this time.

16. Ensure that microphones and podiums are not shared. Each person must be assigned a microphone and/or podium for the duration of the service, and it must be sanitised immediately after each service.

17. Avoid the use of Air Conditioning (AC) units. Keep all windows and doors opened, during the service, if possible.

18. Ensure services do not last for more than ninety (90) minutes. An additional thirty (30) minutes will be allowed to facilitate the departure of everyone. More than one service can be held on the same day, however there must be at least ninety (90) minutes between each service, to facilitate proper sanitizing of the venue.

19. Assign a member(s), in each service, to monitor the observation of all protocols. A copy of the protocols must be made available to them.

RESPONSIBILITY OF COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

- 1.** Ensure that all requests are responded to within two (2) working days.
- 2.** Ensure that only applications meeting the protocols approved by the Ministry of Health are permitted.
- 3.** Ensure monitoring systems are in place.



FUNERALS

1. A maximum of 10 individuals will be allowed to attend funeral services, whether in the church building, or at the graveside.
2. All relevant protocols must be observed.

OTHER CEREMONIES

1. A maximum of 10 individuals will be allowed to attend weddings, whether at the church, or the reception.
2. All relevant protocols must be observed.
3. All other ceremonies, including baptisms, should be suspended until further notice.

OPENING OF CHURCH OFFICES

1. Church offices can be opened to facilitate administrative and counselling services, as well as distribution of supplies to needy people.
2. All protocols must be observed

VIOLATIONS

Any Minister of Religion found in violation of the protocols for the reopening of churches will forfeit the opportunity to continue his/her Ministry throughout the duration of the declared State of Emergency. A new application may be considered under new leadership.



KEY POINTS FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS BEFORE, DURING & AFTER SERVICES

1. Maintain a 6-foot distance at all times.
2. Stay at home, if you are sick.
3. Stay at home if an individual/s from your household has/have been suspected, or was/were tested positive with Covid-19.
4. Practice proper hygiene protocols. Wash hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol, if soap and water is unavailable. **Hand soaps must not be diluted.**
5. Cough and sneeze into tissue and discard the tissue right after use into a bin, or, if there is no tissue, cough into your inner elbow. Wash your hands after coughing. Individuals must leave the building, if they have a persistent cough.
6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
7. Avoid close physical contact with others.
8. Wear an appropriate face mask, covering your nose and mouth, upon entering, while in the building and when leaving.
9. Stay informed and follow the advice given by the Ministry of Health.

Emails concerning the reopening of churches must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary, at the Ministry of Education. All requests forms must be submitted at least three (3) working days prior to the proposed opening date. The email address related to the reopening of churches is religiousaffairsgrenada@gmail.com

Tel: (473) 440 -5347/2061



**GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE
5 TH FLOOR
MINISTERIAL COMPLEX
BOTANICAL GARDENS
TANTEEN
ST.GEORGE'S
GRENADA, W.I.**

For further clarification and details please call the following hotline numbers (Monday to Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.):

- (473) 458-2580
- (473) 410-6832
- (473) 458-7371

The Ministry will accept applications from **Monday, May 18, 2020**. Please use the link provided in the general correspondence to church leaders, to complete the form.

GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA