

Guidelines for Drive-In Worship For Phase 2 (Flattening) Public Health Precautions

While under Phase 2-5 Public Health Precautions under the State of Illinois Recover Illinois Plan, the Illinois Great Rivers Conference has determined that its churches may cautiously consider offering drive-in worship. Public health officials will make a determination of which phase of the Recover Illinois plan is in place. Even in those communities where it is determined to be safe to offer drive-in worship, these guidelines must be followed to do so safely:

- a) Coordinate with your local law enforcement and public health officials to determine permission, guidance, or additional safety recommendations.
- b) Utilize hospitality volunteers or signage to direct parking. Do not have people stop and converse with each other as they enter.
- c) Everyone, including volunteers, staff, and clergy, must follow social distancing guidelines at all times. This includes, wearing masks in public and staying six feet from other people. Pay special attention that worship leaders keep appropriate distancing. This is particularly important as the singing and speaking of the leaders can lead to viral transmission much further than six feet. These practices should continue until the region enters Phase 5 (Illinois Restored). Safest practice includes broadcasting the worship service via FM radio or wifi streaming, and extra caution must be exercised if the worship service is simply amplified to worshippers listening in their vehicles.
- d) No one should leave vehicles for any reason. Do not open tailgates or sit near vehicle in folding chairs. Worshippers should stay in their vehicle. It is safest to leave windows up and closed, but this might not be possible in all situations. Please share this caution with any worshippers. When the region enters Phase 4 (Revitalization), groups of less than 50 may cautiously gather, and worshippers may sit outside their cars if the total attendance is less than 50 people.
- e) In Phase 2, the church building should remain closed. This includes the restrooms. Please do not have worshippers in the church building for any purpose. In Phase 3, restroom facilities in the church building may be used. Arrange for a volunteer to clean the facility between usages and monitor that people keep social distances as they enter and exit the building and facilities. Facilities may be fully opened in Phase 4, but they will need to be maintained, monitored, and sanitized between usages.
- f) Park every other spot, keeping a car width between vehicles. Discourage participants from hanging out windows or yelling between cars. Coronavirus is most commonly spread through respirated water droplets, which can travel up to six feet with regular breathing. Singing, shouting, or talking loudly can send respirated water vapor much, much further.
- g) No one should exchange anything, including passing out bulletins and hymnals or passing the offering plate. Participants should not “just drop this off” to another person while they are at worship.

- h) Communion should not be practiced during drive-in worship during Phase 2. Communion may be practiced with no-touch precautions in later phases, according to instructions and precautions in those phases.
- i) Continue to provide a non-contact worship option for congregants who determine that it is not safe for them to participate in “drive-in worship.”
- j) In advance, have church leaders determine how they will respond to promote group safety if participants do not follow these guidelines.