

*Missionary
Assembly of God
Lakeland, FL*

**GUIDE FOR REOPENING OUR
FACILITIES**

“Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command.”

1 Chronicles 12:32

“But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

INTRODUCTION

Although our facilities have been closed for services, the Church of Jesus Christ is always running. However, the reality of the global pandemic of COVID-19 has made us recalibrate how we offer our worship and community meetings in wise and prudent ways for the greater protection and care of our members and assistants. We emphasize that faith and wisdom walk together for the benefit of our brothers and sisters, the witness of the Church, and the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

As federal and state ordinances are shifting from quarantine to relaunching businesses and faith communities, it is imperative to understand that the world has changed significantly. The Church has also reevaluated, regarding how we worship, equip, and most of all, how we make disciples during this pandemic. However, we remain the Church, and as such we will work to create strategies to reopen the doors of our facilities, hold ecclesiastical events and worship services with a thoughtful relaunch guide. This document attempts to provide a copy to assist us with that goal.

EXAMPLE MESSAGE OF LEADERSHIP TOWARDS THE CONGREGATION

It is essential to lead soberly during this time of uncertainty. Therefore, as leaders in the midst of the church, we must cooperate in unity and spirit of service in this time of transition. We must evaluate the mission to which God has called our church and we must identify how we can continue to impact our community. As we implement the reopening, we will continue to stream our services through our social media platforms, Facebook Live. We know that people will be at different levels of comfort, which is why we as your Pastors, Board and leaders are committed to shepherding all the people in our congregation. We will provide particular attention not to forget vulnerable and high-risk communities. We pray that, in all our processes, God will guide us and help us to be prudent stewards of all the processes of reopening and reintegration.

HYGIENE, CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

We understand that there are some basic logistical elements that must be addressed before inviting people to our facilities. Therefore, we will take time to walk around facilities with an eye for detail and to institute and/or expand maintenance and cleanliness. We understand that the general appearance of facilities will communicate to our visitors and congregants more clearly than ever about the importance of their health. We must be intentional in this area, as it is of utmost importance.

As leaders and with the help of the members of our ministries or departments, we must be assistants when it comes to cleaning the facilities and implement the necessary cleaning and disinfection steps.

General Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols:

- ✓ The facilities will be thoroughly cleaned 24-48 hours after the services, with the exception of Sundays (if a second service becomes necessary).
- ✓ All high-touch surfaces such as tables, doors, light switches, desks, telephones, keyboards, toilets, taps, sinks, etc. will be disinfected with EPA-registered disinfectants.
- ✓ We will take steps to ensure that all water systems (e.g. drinking fountains) are safe to use after prolonged shutdown to minimize the risk of water-associated illness.
- ✓ We will put posters on how to stop the spread of COVID-19 around the facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>

Maintaining Healthy Operations:

- ✓ Hand sanitizing stations will be installed at all entrances to our facilities and/or we will have hand sanitizer available if needed in key areas of the facility.
- ✓ We will have non-contact garbage cans: (1) they will be automatic or if not - (2) they will remain open - to reduce the spread of germs.

CONTACT PROTOCOLS

We will mitigate the risk of transmitting COVID-19 wisely and gently by eliminating physical contact between members of our faith community until further notice:

- ✓ We will demand the use of masks at all meetings and when they are in the facilities by everyone except children under 2 years of age. (Only individuals in the pulpit will temporarily remove masks, maintaining physical distance, for better voice projection.)
- ✓ We will limit the size of the meetings according to the directives of the state and local authorities (6 feet of distance between each “household” or individual). Families from the same home will be able to sit together. This includes weddings, funerals, and any other public events.
- ✓ We will greet each other from at least 6 feet away without touching each other.
- ✓ We will not offer food, unless it is prepackaged.
- ✓ Children may not be left alone without parental/guardian supervision.

Monitoring and Surveillance: (The ushers' ministry will help us in this area)

- ✓ We encourage congregants with health conditions to stay home and continue watching services via Facebook Live.
- ✓ We will notify local health officials if a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been to the facility. We will communicate with staff and congregants about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality as required by the American Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ✓ We will ask that people exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 stay home and self-monitor and follow CDC instructions if symptoms develop.
- ✓ We will close the areas used by the sick person and we will not use that area until after cleaning and disinfecting it. We will wait 24-48 hours to clean and disinfect to reduce the risk to the cleaning staff of the facilities.

- ✓ We will ask staff and congregants not to return to the facilities until they have met CDC criteria:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

We will share the information of all our opening processes to our congregation and to the community in the following ways:

- ✓ We will put a pdf copy of the manual on our website (www.imlag.org) for our congregation. We will also deliver it to all the Leaders, Deacons, members of the Administrative Board and the Ministers of the church. If any member requests it and has an email address, we will provide it by electronic mail.
- ✓ We will make a recorded virtual announcement about our plan that will be placed on our social networks.
- ✓ The guidelines for worship services and meetings in the midst of the facilities will be communicated from the pulpit/altar.
- ✓ We will place informational signs around the facilities, particularly in the areas of greatest use, such as the bathrooms and the lobby.
- ✓ We will train all staff and leaders using this manual and monitor implementation. If necessary, we will reconvene the training to fine-tune the protocols.

CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICES

Seating Accommodation:

We will adjust how and where people sit in order to encourage social distancing:

- ✓ We ask that families arrive early to accommodate them in their seats before services.
- ✓ Once you get to the parking lot, follow the ushers' instructions to line up.
- ✓ Families will wait until the ushers accommodate those in line before them inside.
- ✓ Every other row of seats will be used, distancing one family from the next with six feet apart.
- ✓ We will accommodate the maximum number of people possible within the limits of social distancing. Once the sanctuary is full, families will be accommodated in the overflow room (Activity Room). According to attendance at the first services, the need to hold a second service on Sundays will be evaluated. The services will last a maximum of one hour and fifteen minutes.

Communion:

On Communion Sunday, we will have pre-packaged items available, so there is no contact with the communion cups, only by the person who is taking them with their hands from the container.

Offering and Tithes:

We will modify the methods used to receive offerings and tithes. Offerings and tithes will no longer be collected in the midst of devotional in services. There will be containers at the entrance of the temple, and other strategic places, where you can deposit your offering and tithes when leaving or entering the sanctuary. You can also make contributions online via tithe.ly. You can refer to the church website for instructions (click "Donar"). In this way we avoid the spread of germs.

Water Baptism:

Baptisms in water will be postponed until there is greater safety regarding the contamination of the virus.

Altar calls or Ministry at the altar:

As is our custom, we will continue making "altar calls". However, people will simply raise their hands from their seat for the particular request. We will not lay hands until it is safe. Prayer requests can also be made by text to the Pastor or board members, and such requests will be delivered for intercession at the Tuesday Prayer Service from 7: 00-8: 00 p.m. in the Facebook Live broadcast.

New Converts:

For those making a profession of faith, ushers will fill out the new convert form with their personal information. They can also send an email to lakelandmisioneraad@yahoo.com. The Pastor will contact them and begin their virtual discipleship process.

Pastoral Care:

We will continue to offer pastoral care through conference calls or virtual conferences or office appointments when the need warrants. Maintaining preventive measures at all times to avoid contaminating. Requests can be made through a call to the Church Secretary.

PASTORAL CARE FOR VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY COMMUNITIES

Particular Attention to Your Realities:

We will continue to provide pastoral care and direct care to people who cannot return to a face-to-face service due to their state of health, vulnerability or technological limitations: We will continue calling by phone, sending texts to elderly brothers and sisters or vulnerable and high-risk communities.

We will provide help to people who want to learn to connect to virtual platforms.

We will continue to monitor these communities with our Pastoral Care Team via telephone calls and direct communication.

We will continue offering our services through Facebook Live and sending support messages by text.

We will continue to receive phone calls to our office, which will be transferred to a member of the pastoral team for follow-up.

PERSONNEL

These are important and key people for the reopening of our facilities. We will do everything possible to protect our volunteer workers, leaders and their families, taking the necessary precautions and informing them about the reopening protocols.

Accommodations will be made for high-risk volunteers, if any. Adjustments will also be made for staff with young children.

General Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols for Employees:

- ✓ Each leader and volunteer worker will receive a copy of the following printed sheet and we will train ourselves on how to protect ourselves and others; and how to clean and disinfect our facilities:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Visitor Protocols During Business Hours:

Visitors cannot converse with the church secretary unless they are 6' apart and have their respective face masks on.

If the visitor must enter the office space, the secretary will ensure that the visitor enters with a mask and with clear instructions on our distancing protocols.

The visitor will disinfect their hands before approaching the established area to deposit, or collect any informational materials they need, such as: monthly calendar, offering envelopes, church brochures or any literature that is being provided, etc.

Reopening Phases:

The respective reopening phases will proceed as they are established by the Governor of the State of Florida. Trusting that lives can cooperate in obedience to these phases.