



## MORAVIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, SOUTHERN PROVINCE

Provincial Elders' Conference

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**Memo 2021.04.09**

**To: Pastors, Fellowship Coordinators, and Church Boards**

**Re: Revised Guidelines for Worship Gatherings, Meetings, and Church Offices**

March 23, 2021, the NC Governor issued [Executive Order # 204](#), which further eased certain restrictions on businesses and gatherings.

As of April 8, roughly 22% of the population in NC has been fully vaccinated, which means 78% have not. Public health officials remain concerned about virus variants, and possible increases in the number of cases. Until greater numbers of people are vaccinated, paying attention to the ways to minimize the spread of this disease is essential.

Based on the Executive Order, the Provincial Elders' Conference has modified its guidelines for worship and other church gatherings as follows:

- **The PEC continues to strongly recommend that congregations and fellowships follow the “mass gatherings” directives set by the Governor, which have been revised to permit gatherings of up to 50 people indoors, and up to 100 people outdoors. This remains the safest option until greater numbers are vaccinated.**
- **This recommendation is especially emphasized for NC Counties which are in the orange zone as found in the [NC DHHS COVID-10 County Alert System](#) report. Please consult the updated list, below.**
- For congregations and fellowships located in counties which are in the **yellow zone**, or are absolutely certain (with a written and rehearsed plan) that they are able to meet the standards set in the [NC DHHS Interim Guidance for Places of Worship and Religious Services](#), the PEC strongly recommends that worship gatherings be limited to the Emergency Maximum Occupancy of a facility or room being used for such meetings. This would be whichever is the **lowest** number produced by applying the following tests:

**An important note:** You will need to make physical measurements and calculations to determine just how many people any space can hold while maintaining the required 6 feet of physical distance between members of different households. That number may be significantly lower than the 50% limit.

**For indoor spaces:**

- a. Fifty percent (50%) of the stated fire capacity for each building, room, or other indoor space where people gather. This limit applies separately to each room within a building. For rooms or spaces without a stated fire capacity, the limit is twelve (12) people per one thousand (1000) square feet, rounded up.

**For outdoor spaces:**

Fifty percent (50%) of the stated fire capacity for each outdoor space. For rooms or spaces without a stated fire capacity, the limit is twelve (12) people per one thousand (1000) square feet, rounded up.

**For all gatherings, indoors or out:**

- A registration process should be in place to ensure that the Emergency Maximum Occupancy, or the calculated safe occupancy is not exceeded.
- A roster of those in attendance should be kept so that contact tracing may be done as may be needed.
- Social distancing (at least 6 feet) must be maintained other than for members of the same household.
- Face coverings should be worn at all times by everyone present (following NC recommendations).
- In addition to what is stated above, the PEC **strongly recommends the following:**
  - Other than paid or volunteer staff with specific essential responsibilities, members should not be inside church facilities, except for worship services under the above guidelines.
  - Church offices remain closed to visitors, apart from those engaged in essential activities (such as needed vendor visits, maintenance and repairs).
  - Congregational or choir singing, and large-group bands remain discontinued until further notice. (See note, below).<sup>1</sup>
  - Gatherings for youth and children’s activities continue to meet “virtually”, or outdoors with no more than 25 people, observing social distancing and with face coverings.
  - In-person fellowship gatherings (meals, coffee hour, etc.) remain suspended.
  - Church meetings (boards, committees, Bible studies, fellowship groups) should as much as possible continue to use technology to meet remotely. If there is a decision to have in person meetings, these should involve no more than 25 people, following all necessary precautions (The Three W’s, proper sanitation, exit and entry plans, etc.)
  - People at high risk (age 65 years or older, and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions) stay home and travel only for absolutely essential purposes.
  - Practice the Three Ws: Wear a cloth face covering. Wait six feet apart. Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.

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<sup>1</sup> Singing or playing instruments outdoors may not be as risky as indoors, but the virus particles are tiny, linger in the air, and can travel for long distances even on a very light breeze. Bands should be limited to no more than 4 to 5 players, facing the same direction, 6 to 8 feet apart from one another; if outdoors, make sure no one is downwind from the band. Lower-risk musical activities could include hand bells (a small group, masked, physically distanced, gloved, and not sharing bells; Orff instruments; a solo singer (distanced from any accompanist); stringed instruments (players masked). In place of congregational hymns, have a soloist sing, or the organist play the hymn while someone reads the words aloud.

**Data From  
NC Dept. of Health and Human Services  
COVID-19 County Alert System Report  
April 1, 2021**

The most recent Report (Apr. 1)), including the data on which it is based may be found in full [HERE](#).

NC counties where there are Moravian congregations are listed below:

- Catawba - yellow                      New Hope
- Davidson – yellow                    Enterprise, Community Fellowship
- Davie – **orange**                        Macedonia
- Forsyth – light yellow                Advent, Ardmore, Bethabara, Bethania, Bethesda, Calvary,  
Christ, Clemmons, Fairview, Friedberg, Friedland, Fries  
Memorial, Home, Hope, Hopewell, Immanuel New Eden,  
Kernersville, Konnoak Hills, Messiah, Mizpah, New  
Philadelphia, Oak Grove, Olivet, Pine Chapel, Providence,  
Rural Hall, St. Philips, Trinity, Union Cross, Unity
  
- Guilford – yellow                      First Greensboro, Moravia
- Mecklenburg – yellow                Little Church, New Beginnings, Peace
- New Hanover – yellow                Covenant
- Rockingham – yellow                Leaksville, Mayodan
- Stokes – light yellow                Fulp, King
- Surry – **orange**                        Grace
- Wake – yellow                         Raleigh