



Bishop David Graves, in conjunction with the Alabama-West Florida cabinet, is recommending the cancellation of all in-person worship and church meetings through June 1, 2020.

“We continue to assess recommendations from health officials, government leaders and medical experts about our best plan to reopen churches,” stated Bishop David Graves. “This is a sensitive topic because as United Methodists, we are passionate about in-person worship and the way it shapes our faith journey. I share your deep desire to gather again and celebrate our risen savior, but we simply cannot make that recommendation with the information we currently have.”

In the meantime, conference leadership recommends the following:

1. Establish a COVID-19 task force leadership team within your local church to discuss a restart plan;
2. Develop a written plan for your local church that can be communicated to your members to establish trust before reopening;
3. Review the [restart resources document](#) on the conference Website to understand the necessary steps a church must take to reopen its doors;
4. Assess your cleaning and personal protection supply inventory and discuss with your leadership team how to best acquire needed supplies to ensure the health and safety of your congregation when in-person worship does begin.

“Although other businesses have begun to reopen, we must realize our houses of worship differ greatly than a brief visit to a store,” said Graves. “Between the duration of worship, limited staff at many local churches and the scarcity of cleaning supplies, to name a few, it is essential that our churches take the re-opening process seriously in the coming weeks and understand the challenges before us.”

The bishop, cabinet and leadership team will continue to assess when churches may gather again and will communicate a future recommendation on May 21, 2020.