



Christian Civic League of Maine

Associated with Focus on the Family

The Christian Civic League has been in regular contact with Gov. Mills' administration to get clarification and advice for ministry leaders who have the responsibility of operating their ministries under the present emergency orders. The answers to these frequently asked questions are based upon those conversations.

Can churches still livestream services?

In short, the answer is yes. The questions our leaders must ask themselves are, "Who truly is essential or necessary to produce our services; are we executing these services in the safest fashion with minimal personal contact?" Ministry leaders will have to decide how many participants are required and be responsible for adhering to social distance requirements.

Since churches have been categorized as non-essential, are they allowed to provide essential services?

State and municipal governments are still desirous that churches and faith-based entities will continue to provide essential services such as food distribution, providing essential transportation, and other programs being offered to their congregation and community members. Counselling scenarios that cannot be accomplished remotely such as dealing with significant mental health issues, essential marriage counselling, and substance abuse/recovery programs can be executed utilizing safe distancing along with gloves and masks. Once again, the responsibility is upon the ministry leaders to make sure that once they deem a service essential, everything is being done to minimize personal contact and maximize public safety (i.e., is the food being left in drop-off areas? Are other items that are being delivered or picked up being sanitized?).

What are examples of minimal operations for a church or other non-essential entities?

The emergency declaration does not prohibit safe and regulated operations such as maintenance, security, banking, and other activities that must proceed for a ministry to survive.

What about the concept of gathering either through social distancing in auditoriums or drive-in services?

No gathering of over ten, regardless of distance requirements, would be lawful at this time. The concept of a drive-in service where people come to a church parking lot in their personal vehicles is not necessarily prohibited. However, the administration has a preference that we do not promote this option. If ministry leaders decide to conduct a drive-in service, they would have to convince local authorities that they could guarantee that no one would leave their car.

Our civic leaders are counting on ministry decision makers to operate within a framework that emphasizes and prioritizes safety and not just our rights. The League urges church leaders to continue offering respect and compliance to a government doing its best to protect its citizens in a very trying time. Carroll Conley, Executive Director