

Revised Ohio Conference “Ministry Does Not Stop” COVID-19 Action Plan

These Three Stages are Cumulative Ohio Conference Has Entered STAGE 2

Effective June 2, 2020, the Ohio Conference Confirms this Action for all Organizations and in Accord with Legal Orders Issued by the Office of Ohio Governor and Ohio Department of Health

Office of the Governor: <https://tinyurl.com/y7jcg2p5>

Ohio Department of Health: <https://tinyurl.com/yakf7zfb>

Ohio State Government Updates Portal: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>

Ohio Conference Facility Reopening Plan: <https://tinyurl.com/y9fjgy5v>

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1, NLT)

STAGE 2 | CONFIRMED CASES IN YOUR COUNTY

As of June 3, 2020, all of Ohio's 88 counties have reported confirmed cases; state-wide cases total 36,350

- Local churches may resume worship in-person, following [Ohio Department of Health revised orders](#) on business guidance and social distancing and [CDC guidelines](#). Encourage continued use of online options for worship services, meetings and community gatherings; teleconferencing or equivalent as alternative.*
- Select conference sponsored events will gradually begin resuming as permitted by aforementioned State of Ohio Department of Health and CDC guidelines and orders. Churches may resume select social events/activities/evangelism programs following same.*
- Nonessential travel for pastors and staff remains postponed until further notice.
- Vulnerable people groups are encouraged not to attend in favor of online worship.
- Strongly recommend those who aren't feeling well to stay home. Strongly encourage those who are symptomatic to remain home.
 - Advise those leaders and congregants with **confirmed cases of COVID-19** not to return to the facility until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.
- Masks and appropriate face coverings are strongly encouraged.
- Ensure adequate social distancing, six (6) feet between people.
- No communal food served on church premises (fellowship meal/potluck, shared snacks, food platters, communion, etc). Only individually packaged, single-portion foods to be provided.
- Extra cleaning and sanitation before and after any worship services, as well as small groups such as Sabbath Schools and midweek services ([utilizing CDC guidelines](#)).
- Leave doors with handles open to minimize contact with these surfaces.
- Encourage removal of hymnals, Bibles, and other items from the chairs/pews to prevent multiple contact.
- Consider placing an offering drop-box in the lobby or rear of the church/sanctuary. Avoid

passing offering plates from person to person. Encourage online giving.

- Bulletins may be available, but should not be distributed at the doors.
- Strongly recommend “no-contact” greetings between members.
- Emphasize handwashing for 20 seconds and use of hand sanitizer.
- Travel for church staff and church-sponsored ministries should be limited. Consider continuation of virtual or teleconference meetings.
- Cleaning to be provided after morning rental church, and evening rental church.
- Ohio Conference employees to continue to work from home as much as possible. Conference day-to-day operations will continue without interruption.

**Should the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases begin to spike, and the State of Ohio rescinds or modifies their orders and guidelines, the Ohio Conference will adjust these permissions as well.*

STAGE 1 | CONFIRMED CASES IN STATE OF OHIO

- All worship, ministries, and meetings in church, school or camp facility may resume if they can operate under the recommended physical distancing protocols.
- Extra sanitation and cleaning performed throughout the building ([utilizing CDC guidelines](#)).
- Encourage communication between members with words rather than physical contact.
- Encourage those not feeling well, the elderly or at higher risk to stay home.
- Encourage thorough handwashing and use of hand sanitizer.
- For those uncomfortable with attending in person, encourage online streaming.
- Ohio Conference employees to return to the conference office and other worksites.

STAGE 3 | CONFIRMED CASE IN YOUR CHURCH **OR**

Upon local, state and federal advisement of health officials, Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists directive, or Risk Management counsel.

- All in-person church services and small groups remain discontinued until given explicit consent by the conference to resume.
- All schools will remain closed until given guidance to reopen.
- Any and all facility use, including rehearsals, meetings, concerts, and facility rentals remain suspended until further notice.
- Childcare programs (including daycare/learning centers) should strongly consider discontinuation of this service. If these programs continue during Stage 3, it is recommended that they apply for [temporary licensing procedures](#) issued by the State of Ohio’s Department of Job and Family Services, and have this application approved.
- Use of the building for rental churches or ministries/outreach programs remains suspended until given guidance to continue.
- All church sponsored events and in-person gatherings of any size (on and off-site) remain suspended until further notice.
- Camp Mohaven remains closed until given guidance to reopen.
- Ohio Conference employees will be given leave to work from home as much as possible. Those working in the office will follow the “[Responsible Guidelines](#)” outlined by the Ohio Department of Health. Conference day-to-day operations will continue without interruption.

- New ways for members to continue to financially support their church (local and worldwide) will be utilized as church buildings may be closed, but financial responsibilities remain. [AdventistGiving](#) is the easiest option for churches, but tithe may also be mailed to local church treasurers or the Ohio Conference office.
- All churches, schools, and offices to perform an extra-deep cleaning of ALL surfaces prior to resuming church and school programs ([as recommended by the CDC](#)). The Ohio Conference will, in harmony with guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health and the Office of the Governor of the State of Ohio, notify pastors, churches, educators, schools, and all staff of when services and activities may resume. Updates will continue to be posted on our website at www.ohioadventist.org/virus.

MINISTRY DOES NOT STOP in the Ohio Conference. Worship is a way of life and has not, and will not, be cancelled. Ministry does not stop because we cannot worship together in a **building**. Ministry can and will continue because of **you**.

Visit www.ohioadventist.org/virus/ministrydoesnotstop for resources on how worship, small groups, meetings, Bible studies, new ministry ideas and more can continue while we are in **Stage 2** and beyond.

Share what you are doing in your area with the hashtag, **#ministrydoesnotstop**.

John 16:33 says, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

If you have questions regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19 please call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

If you have questions about COVID-19 within the Ohio Conference, please call 1-837-853-8468 between 9:00 AM and 8:00 PM.