![Western North Carolina Conference – The United Methodist Church logo]

COVID-19 Update for Local Churches – April 29, 2021

Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform The World

Yesterday, Governor Cooper issued a further easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The Bishop and Cabinet remain committed to our biblical mandate to "love our neighbors as ourselves" and our Wesleyan call to "do no harm."

We continue to recommend that all local churches and other ministries follow the guidance of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as they make decisions about indoor worship, small groups, and other gatherings.

Using Governor Cooper's Executive Order No. 209 as a guide, the Bishop and Cabinet make these specific recommendations:

- As long as your county is not in the "red," indoor worship may be considered using a limit of 50% capacity as long as social distancing can be maintained. Masks must be worn throughout the service. The recommendation for not having a full choir remains in effect. Humming or quiet singing by the congregation with their masks on is acceptable.

- A 100-person limit should be maintained for all other gatherings inside the church building. Please continue to socially distance and wear masks at these events as well.

- Due to the complex nature of food service that increases risk, we continue to discourage indoor congregational meals or refreshments. Let us be patient in restarting fellowship gatherings with food in order to continue to keep people safe.

We give thanks for widespread availability of Covid-19 vaccinations and for the level trends of the virus in North Carolina over the past two weeks. We continue to hold all those who have been impacted by COVID-19 in our prayers, and particularly those in India, where the virus is spreading rapidly. As we give thanks for the

positive data and trends in North Carolina, may we now work toward achieving the same results throughout the world.

[FAQ for Executive Order 209](#)