



# Western North Carolina Conference

The United Methodist Church

## COVID-19 Update for Local Churches – March 24, 2021

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*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 celebrate that percentages of positive test results and hospitalizations continue to show improvement while vaccine distribution increases. However, we are also aware that people across our conference are still losing loved ones due to this virus. Thus, 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. 204](#) as a guide, the Bishop and Cabinet make these specific recommendations:

- For those churches whose counties are 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 50-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.

As we continue to journey to the cross and then celebrate Jesus' resurrection, may we give thanks for all those who are working tirelessly to give vaccinations, and may we be mindful of the over 500,000 persons in the United States who have lost their lives during this pandemic and keep all of those who mourn their loss in prayer.

[FAQ for Executive Order 204](#)

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Find resources for online and in-person worship and ministry during COVID-19 [here](#).