**Church Leadership Conversation Starters before Re-Opening**

*Disclaimer: The Classical Interim Committee has put together a tool to assist in conversations regarding re-opening Churches and is not a legal opinion. The questions in this document are a set of tools to help in building a plan and are not meant to be comprehensive, but to be taken as conversation starters.* (**Note:** This document contains questions and some examples that are not an attempt to tell you what to do. It only attempts to give examples for consideration. Our sincere hope is that the questions & examples are beneficial either as areas to consider, something helpful to implement or as something that inspires other ideas that fit your context.)

1. **Read & Know Badger Bounce Back Plan?** 
   1. Have you read and understood the Badger Bounce-back Plan? All the questions in this document are to be considered with regard to the Badger Bounce-Back Plan.
   2. What decision will you make regarding gathering for worship in part depends on which phase we are in.
   3. Example #1: Phase 1 of re-opening according to the plan only allows for gathering of 10 people.
   4. Example #2: Phase 2 of the plan only allows for a gathering of 50 people.
   5. What risks might a church face if they choose not to comply with the Badger Bounce Back Plan?
2. **Communication?** 
   1. Create a re-opening plan that is balanced and reflects the Gospel of Grace. Try to keep in mind not only state restrictions, but how to cast a wide-net to have the opportunity to connect with all those new people watching your services.
   2. Example #1: Develop a plan for communication. How will you communicate? Will there be stages, deadlines set or any specifics to appropriately update your Church?
   3. Example #2: Is there a plan to communicate to all the new people who have just connected with your services online?
   4. Example #3: Is communication to people with at risk health concerns in a congregation necessary? Should the leadership communicate to the congregation addressing with sensitivity those at higher risk of having infection? Should the leadership communicate clearly expectations for those who are currently sick?
3. **Sanitary Practices?** What practices will you encourage or require while at Church?
   1. Example #1: What should be communicated regarding “touch” practices, such as handshakes, hugs etc. be handled? How do you plan to communicate these details?
   2. Example #2: What will you communicate regarding face-masks? Do you simply communicate that it is up to the individual to decide? Or do you communicate that it is required?
   3. Example #3: Do you plan to make any changes regarding congregational singing? Are encouraging facemasks something worth considering?
4. **Limited Capacity?** What if your worship gathering is initially limited in number (ie. A designated number like 50 or 100 per church building or only allowed 25% of total sanctuary-room capacity) and how gatherings will be managed and how many gatherings to have?
   1. Please Note: currently the Badger Bounce-back Plan is set to re-open Churches at 10 per service for phase 1 and up to 50 people per service during phase 2. The State Supreme Court or legislature may change when we re-open, but currently overturning the stay at home order will not overturn the Badger Bounce-Back Plan.
   2. Example #1: should there be continued online services until the state lifts all restrictions?
   3. Example #2 should there be multiple open live in person services?
5. **Multiple Services & Church Staff?** If the Church decides to have multiple worship services & multiple group gatherings (ie. Sunday school, small group bible study etc…), how will the Church make sure not to over-extend and over-work their church staff including pastors, worship leaders, youth pastors, children’s directors etc.?
   1. Adding Services increases the workload of the pastor, worship leaders and volunteers if you increase to multiple services. How do you keep in mind a realistic expectation of them? Because this might be a pattern of expectation for several weeks or months, how do you help with managing your staff and volunteer needs?
6. **Expectations?** As leaders how can you set realistic expectations for people attending services & communicate those expectations? How does this affect how we respond as leaders? What are some appropriate limits leaders can communicate to set towards expectations of re-opening church?
   1. Setting expectations to congregations empowers the church to understand what they can do.
   2. Example #1: Communicate to the Congregation what re-opening looks like before actually opening. This is not an opening of the floodgates, re-opening does not mean that things will return to the norm pre- COVID-19. Rather, there are restrictions according to the Badger Bounce-back plan that we must follow according to the law.
   3. Example #2: Regularly communicate expectations of any changes, updates or continuing to send reminders of what Phase we are in the Badger Bounce back plan and what the level of performance in ministry looks like according to that phase.
7. **State-Rules for Sanitizing?** If a Church decides to have live-in person services according to the badger bounce-back plan, given by the State of Wisconsin, how will you implement sanitizing the building for having multiple services? What does a sterilization plan look like for your context?
   1. Example #1: Will there be a sanitizing team in between services?
   2. Note: Take into account that the COVID-19 virus can last hours or days depending on the surface, unless cleaned. You can look this up easily online.
8. **Sanitary Sacraments?** What adjustments will you make to the Lord’s Supper, baptisms, and your worship ministry?
   1. How will the bread & wine of communion be handled & distributed?
   2. Councils might want to discuss what measures should be taken in the worship space and worship practices and then communicate those decisions to the congregation to minimize concerns of infection.
   3. Example #1: Can the Church use packaged & sealed pre-filled cups of juice & wafers handed to the congregation to make things easier to distribute, more efficient and more sanitary?
   4. Example #2: Will the congregation come up to the table to receive communion (bread & wine) from 1 or 2 people that are masked and gloved?
   5. Example #3: Person who prepares elements (bread & wine) wears mask and gloves?
9. **Hygienic Offerings?** How will you continue weekly offerings?
   1. Passing the offering plate may cause people anxiety due to being a common plate that many people touch.
   2. Do you continue passing the offering plate practice or are there other options to consider?
   3. Example #1: people coming up to give their offering to the plate at the alter, or asking people to continue to give online or sending in their checks via regular mail?
   4. Example #2: Some Churches are encouraging people to give their offerings while they enter and exit the building in an offering box.
10. **Children’s Church?** Will Sunday School and Walk-Out-Worship continue or be discontinued for the time being?
11. **Special Events?** How are special events to be hosted? What expectations should be set to people who rent/lease space for weddings, funerals etc…?
12. **Hospitality after Church?** Will things like coffee, bars, cookies or other snack items still be offered after services? If so, what precautions should be considered?
13. **Greeting?**
    1. Example #1: Should the way Church greeters welcoming people as they enter the building change in any way?
    2. Example #2: Will you have a person-to person greeting during the worship service? Should touching like handshaking be discouraged for a limited time?
    3. Example #3: Is there a more creative way to do greetings of one another during a limited time?
14. **Social Distancing?** According to the State Bounce-Back Plan, social distancing is still expected through phase 2, so what does social distancing look like in your sanctuary?
    1. Example #1: Offer more services?
    2. Example #2: Continue Worship Online?
    3. Example #3: Remove chairs for appropriate distancing?
    4. Example #4: Block off Pews or aisles?
    5. Encourage people to sit in family units, but 6 feet apart from others? (2-3 chair lengths).
15. **Ministry Responses?** Should there be a response or encouragement from leaders to people affected mentally by the COVID-19 crisis?
    1. Example #1: Addictions to substances are up. – sermons addressing this? Encouraging particular ministries?
    2. Example #2: Addictions to porn are up. - sermons addressing this? Encouraging particular ministries?
    3. Example #3: People struggling with depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts are up.-sermons addressing this? Encouraging particular ministries?
16. **Fellowship After Worship Service?**  How is fellowship after service imagined to continue?
    1. Example #1: Should it continue in its current form before COVID-19 quarantine?
    2. Example #2: Should people be encouraged to continue social distancing?
    3. Example #3: Should people be encouraged to go home and not stick around for fellowship?
17. **New Ministry Opportunities?**
    1. What is possible now, that was not possible before? What new ministry possibilities have been opened to your church?
    2. Example #1 Invest in new digital equipment to provide Live Online Services?
    3. Example #2: New Staff or Volunteers? Is there a need for new paid staff or volunteer position that is responsible to oversee technical aspects of digital online video content, streaming and the equipment? Are there other areas that need new staff to support any new opportunities?