

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 9, 2020

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## **Gov. Evers Reiterates Options Available for Religious Gatherings and Services**

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers reiterates options for religious gatherings and services. Religious organizations and places of worship have inquired about opportunities to continue offering faith-based services and gatherings while still complying with the governor’s “safer at home” order.

Gov. Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm issued a Safer at Home order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, effective at 8 a.m. on Weds., March 25, 2020. This order remains in effect until 8 a.m. on Fri., April 24, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued.

This order applies to the entire state. All Wisconsinites must stay at home as much as possible and non-essential businesses and operations must cease, with limited exceptions for minimum basic operations and working from home. All public and private gatherings of any number of people that are not part of a single household or living unit are prohibited, except for the limited exceptions contained in the order.

Under the governor’s order, churches and religious entities are considered essential. Any gathering must include fewer than 10 people at a time if it occurs in a room or confined space. Thus, churches and religious entities wishing to conduct services while still complying with the governor’s order may, for example, conduct services via:

- Parking lots with congregants staying in cars, avoiding person-to-person contact;
- Streaming online; and
- Having small gatherings (fewer than 10 people in each room) with multiple services.

Churches and religious entities are encouraged to review and comply with all DHS guidelines, including guidelines for community and faith based organizations available [here](#).

The governor’s Safer at Home order is enforceable by any local law enforcement official, including county sheriffs; however, the governor’s office has not asked law enforcement to supervise or take enforcement steps against religious gatherings. We continue to ask local law enforcement to assist local communities and congregations understand the governor’s Safer at Home order and help folks take precautions to keep themselves, our neighbors, and our communities safe.

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